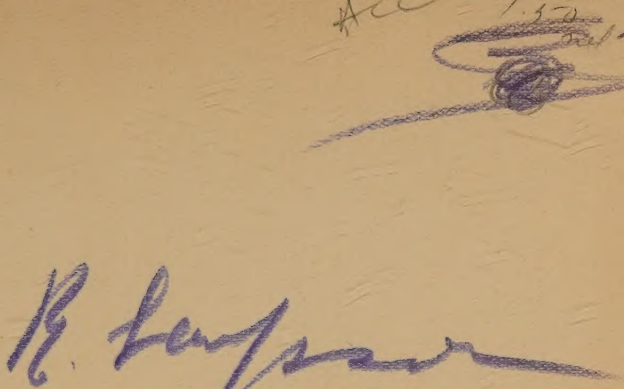

FABRI CONCIONES

SERMONS

OF

REV. M. FABRI, S. J.,

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN

BY REV. M. J. CONWAY.

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1900

THE SERMONS OF

REVEREND M. FABRI, S. J.,

SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

THE TRANSLATOR KINDLY ASKS THE

INDULGENCE OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY

TO WHOM THE WORK IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

WHAT SHOULD AROUSE US FROM THE SLEEP OF SIN?

I. The vanity of sleep. II. The time of grace. III. The snares of the enemy. IV. The approach of reward. V. Present and future calamities.

"It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep" (Romans 13 : 11).

TO-DAY we begin to expect our Lord who will shortly come to us, and for this reason, Holy Mother Church, to arouse us from the sleep of sin and to urge us to go forth like the prudent Virgins, cries out in the words of St. Paul: "Brethren, it is now the hour to rise from sleep, for our salvation is nearer."

By these words she means what Christ and John the Baptist meant in the beginning of their preaching, namely: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is near at hand." At this time we should strive by all means to have Christ, on the day of his nativity, born in us in a new and spiritual manner; and to accomplish this we must rise from the sleep of sin.

For as when, in the time of Augustus, Christ was born in Bethlehem, the glad tidings were made to those only who were tending and watching their flocks at night; so they only will be joyful and partakers of the fruit of Christ's birth who, having risen from the sleep of sin, are watching in penance and works of virtue.

"It is now the hour." These were the words that aroused St. Augustine from the sleep of sin, as he himself says that, having been warned by a divine voice to take up and read, by accident he opened the book at the words: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chamberings and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the

Lord Jesus Christ;" and at once he was changed into another man. Cannot this same voice arouse other sinners?

I. The vanity and danger of deadly sleep. St. Chrysostom says: "The night is passed; let us rise from dreams, for, though they be pleasant, they are nevertheless delusions" (Hom. 62 ad Pop.). Sleep indeed brings rest to man but not delight, for its sweetness is not perceived by any one, as then all the powers of body and mind are fast asleep, the imagination only is working, by which the dreamer pictures to himself dignities, honor, delights and wealth, and revels in them as though in actual possession; but after he has awakened he sees that what he thought was his is a mere illusion and a dream. Such, according to the apostle, is the state of the sinner, whose higher reason, which should attend to eternal and spiritual things, is fast asleep.

The lower reason alone, which attends to temporal things, is watchful and delights in the possession of earthly goods; after awhile it shall awake and clearly see eternal things and shall then understand that all temporal things are vain and imaginary; the only true and solid ones being eternal. Philip the Good of Belgium very happily illustrates this. Having found a man asleep outside the palace gate he ordered him brought in and laid on the royal couch. On the following day he had him clothed in princely attire and shown all the honor possible. When night came, the man, being drunk with wine, was clothed in his own garments and placed where at first he had been found. Awaking on the following day, he rightly concluded that the princely life he led was all a dream.

The same thing shall happen to sinners and lovers of this world when, on opening the eyes of their higher reason, they behold eternal things, they shall acknowledge that they had been dreaming and that earthly pleasures were mere illusions. "And as he that is hungry dreameth, and eateth, but when he is awake his soul is empty: and as he that thirsteth dreameth, and drinketh, and after he is awake is yet faint with thirst, and his soul is empty: so shall be the multitude of all the Gentiles that have fought against Mount Sion" (Isaias 29: 8).

These, while they enjoy pleasures, consider themselves blessed and that they are kings and princes, seated in the clouds, and rate all other men as crawling ants. They do not see that they alone are poor and naked and miserable mortals.

This truth shall be made known to them on the day when naked they shall be returned to mother earth, whence naked they were born ; when they shall open their eyes they shall see how transitory were all earthly things. "They have slept their sleep : and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands" (Ps. 75 : 6). The danger of this sleep is that through habit it binds men to earth. That is what happened to Sisara, through whose brains, Jahel, Haber's wife, drove nails into the ground : "and so passing from deep sleep to death he fainted away and died" (Judges 4 : 21). Thus he who sleeps with his mind filled with worldly thoughts will soon be nailed to earth by the nail of habit, so that he cannot rise, and in the meantime he dies to awaken in hell. It often happens that, to avoid the heat, one lies down under a tree ; but after an hour or so, the shade is pierced by the rays of the sun, and then his head begins to ache.

Sinners make a tree of earthly goods which God has given them ; beneath it they rest and inordinately rejoice, when suddenly the worm of death gnaws at its root and saps its life. Then they experience the burning wind of a bad conscience and see themselves in the flames of hell.

This is what happened to the rich man Dives in the Gospel. Looking up from his gloomy prison, he saw Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham. He had followed his lower reason and had sated himself with earthly delights, while the poor man followed his higher reason and looked on all worldly things as illusions.

II. The advent of light, that is, Christ in the flesh, or the time of grace : the dawn has appeared and it is time to rise. As the dawn comes between night and the full light of day, so the time of grace comes between the darkness of infidelity and sin and the light of heavenly glory. Before the coming of Christ the Gentiles walked in darkness, not knowing whither they were going—to death or to life. Aristotle, the most learned of philosophers, when dying said : "I know not whither I go. I know not if both body and soul shall die ; and if the soul does not die, I know not whither it goes." They could not easily order their lives, since they did not know if the way led to heaven or to hell. The night for them was most obscure. The fathers of the Old Testament lived in darkness, but not altogether obscure, since they were illumined by prophetic lights as by stars ; yet they walked in the shadow of figures and in the expectation of a

future light; nor did they clearly know the road to heaven and the road to hell, for they had the darkness of errors in their ceremonies, laws, traditions, and in the very intellect, because they had not yet seen the Light of the world nor had heard the voice of the unerring guide, Christ. "All were under a cloud," says St. Paul. The blessed in heaven, in the full light of day, see all things most clearly "face to face."

We Christians have the dawn, since we have Christ, and we know with him as leader and guide how we must journey to heaven. We know, also, the way that leads to perdition, although we do not see the end of the road, God and glory, to which we are tending. "For we know in part and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. 13). Therefore, when the hour of rising is the dawn, it is time for us to rise from the sleep of sin. What would the Gentiles not have done if they had this light? The fathers of the Old Testament, beholding and saluting this light from afar only, the nearer they approached it aspired more ardently to every species of perfection. Hence the Church, with St. Thomas, urges us to rise from sin and to strive earnestly for virtue, because the coming of the Saviour is nearer than before. What would they have done if they had seen Christ? Justly, then, will Jew and Gentile condemn the Christian sleeping in sin.

It is extremely dangerous to neglect such an opportunity for meriting, as the light is, as the Apostle indicates when he says: "Knowing the time," that is, the time is short. The whole of that time you spend in sin you lose, and you throw away all the good deeds that you could have stored up for yourself. If a rich city were given over to plunder to the soldiers who made all haste to secure the booty, and one of their number lay down to sleep under a tree, saying that he would take another time to secure his portion, would not the others laugh at him and call him a fool? When at this precious time the kingdom of heaven is given over to us to take away, "for it suffers violence, and the violent take it away," should not every prudent person hasten to share the booty, those heavenly treasures? The sinner not only loses these treasures, but heaps up for himself most bitter punishments. Just as the interest on a loan increases until the debt is paid, so sins not soon wiped out in penance merit greater punishment and easily draw others, and so increase the rate of punishment.

III. The snares of our enemies. Some are within us, namely, sins which lay siege to the conscience and keep it in a continual state of turmoil, than which nothing in this life seems more atrocious; nor is there any other way of quieting the enemy but that of penance. Added to these are enemies from without—the devils themselves, who hold the sinner in slavery, and who desire nothing more than that he be taken out of this life or that power would be given them to kill him, lest he should slip from them. If the sinner only knew how they exult over him, and what cunning they use to ensnare him, he certainly would tremble and rise from his sleep immediately. Do we not know the story of Samson and Dalila? He had slept, and in that sleep she cut off his hair, thus depriving him of his strength and leaving him to the mercy of the Philistines, who plucked out his eyes and cast him into prison (Judges 6). In the same way the sinner, filled with the delights of this world, sleeps in his sins; then the evil ones surround him on all sides, despoil him of his love of virtue and power of resisting temptation, blind him and drag him into hell. And how easily does the world he loved cast him off and leave him on the broad road to ruin! This twofold enemy the Apostle speaks of in to-day's epistle: "Let us put off the works of darkness and put on the arms of light" (Rom. 13). What are the works of darkness unless sins; the arms of light unless those to be used against the snares of the demons?

IV. The nearness of the promised reward, "for our salvation is near at hand." This is the same argument Christ and John used when they said: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It is at hand because now, after the coming of Christ, we are not far from the kingdom of heaven; we are nearing the end of our earthly journey, the gate of heaven has been opened with the key of the cross of Christ, and if there be no obstacle, we can fly there at once, not like our forefathers who died before Christ, for some had to wait in Limbo a hundred—a thousand and more years. Our years on earth are shorter than were those of the patriarchs and prophets. If an exile, after a long absence, on reaching his native land acquires new strength and runs more swiftly; if horses, though tired, begin to run as they near their stable, should not Christian men rise from their sleep and gain new strength, running more swiftly to blessedness the nearer they come to it? Since heaven is our

true home, should we not strive to hasten thither? The sinner prefers to be a citizen of this world rather than of heaven; but since no one can be a citizen of this world forever, he will lose both heaven and the world, like the Jews, who, according to St. Augustine (Tract 49 in John), feared to lose their temporal possessions when they said: "The Romans will come, and they will take away our place and race." They did not think of eternal life, and so they lost both.

St. Gregory (Book V, Moral. C. 3) says: "Persons digging for a treasure become more excited the nearer they come to it." The treasure hidden in the field of heaven is near the sinner, who can quickly find it by means of the sacrament of Penance. Why, therefore, does he not, filled with joy, go sell all he has and buy that field? Does he not rather seek the treasure in this world and forget all about that in heaven? Let him take care that he dig not down to hell, for salvation is no nearer to the just than perdition is to the wicked. If, therefore, the nearness of the heavenly treasure does not move him, at least let the nearness of hell do so.

Secondly, the kingdom of heaven is at hand and our salvation is nearer, because now the grace and mercy of God, nay, the kingdom of God, which is bought by grace, is most liberally offered to us. Christ says to those seeking that kingdom: "Behold, the kingdom of God is in you" (Luke 17); that is, in your hand, in your power, for my grace I liberally offer you, and if you have this in you, you will have the kingdom of God in you; for this reason the time of the new law is called the time of grace. Why, then, O sinner, do you hesitate to rise from sleep? Did you deny your God? But Peter denied him three times and returned to grace. The penitent thief found grace with Christ, as did Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, St. Paul and others.

V. The calamities of present and future. Boys are accustomed to be roused by the rod. God asked Jeremias: "What seest thou, Jeremias?" And he said: "I see a rod watching." And the Lord said: "Thou hast seen well: for I will watch over my word to perform it" (Jer. 1: 11).

According to the Chaldaic: "You have seen the king of the Chaldæans, whom I use to scourge my people because they sleep in their crimes. I shall watch over them and shall arouse them with the rod." What else does God do

with us now? Do we not see the watchful rod of wars, pestilence and famine? And why does it watch over us unless because we are sleeping; it would indeed sleep if we were watching; but because we sleep it watches. When a boy is slow rising from bed his father shows him the rod, and he rises immediately, otherwise he would not only see it but feel it also. Let no one deceive himself, this rod will watch as long as we are asleep. Shortly after this vision Jeremias saw a boiling caldron, that is, the terrible anger of God, which was poured forth and destroyed Jerusalem. If sinners do not rise at the stroke of this rod, it is to be feared that the caldron of fury will be poured on them and finally destroy them. "Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13). Let us watch, therefore, with the simple shepherds, that we may be worthy to receive the Lord. "Blessed is that servant whom, when the Lord will come, he shall find watching."

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

WHAT MUST BE DONE DURING ADVENT?

I. Mortification. II. Purifying Conscience. III. Meditation on the coming of Christ. IV. Ardent desire to see Christ. V. Almsgiving and preparation for Communion.

"Art thou he that art to come?" (Matt. 11:3).

We know what elaborate preparations are made to receive a distinguished visitor. We are expecting now a visit from our great Leader, Christ, who is coming to treat of what should concern us most, namely, our salvation. Let us see what kind of house we prepare for him. Let us hear David, who, when he had gathered a great quantity of gold, silver, precious stones, and woods for the building of the temple, said: "The work is great; for a house is prepared not for man, but for God" (1. Paralip. 29:1). If the whole earth were gold or of a more precious metal, and constructed into one magnificent temple, then it would not be a suitable footstool for the Lord and Creator. The soul free from sin is a fit habitation for God. The Church, knowing how basely the Bethlehemites acted who refused admittance to the coming Christ and forced him into a stable, carefully admonishes us not to be guilty of a like contempt and receive Christ in the foul stable of our heart, lest we provoke his most just anger. The tabernacle of our hearts will be pleasing to God, if we build it like the one Moses ordered for him. Five things he wished especially in it: in the entrance, an altar of holocausts and a

lavatory where the priests should wash before the sacrifice; in the tabernacle a candlestick of many branches, an altar of incense and a table.

I. First then let us erect an altar of holocausts, which is the heart immolating itself to God by mortification. This ought to be in the entrance that is before we approach the holy of holies. The victims to be immolated are the concupiscences, the delights of the body, all worldly cares and desires from which we should withdraw, especially at this time. Holy Church invites us to this, while during this season she omits the canticles of joy: "Glory to God in the highest," and "Holy God, we praise thy name;" while she clothes her ministers and altars in penitential purple. The example of holy David invites us. He withdrew from the court of King Saul and went to Bethlehem, his own city, "because there were solemn sacrifices there for all his tribe" (1 Kings 20). What would he have done if he knew that there he would find Christ born? The shepherds who were keeping watch over their sheep invite us. When they had heard the glad tidings of the birth of Christ, they hastened to that ever memorable town saying: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see this word that is come to to pass" (Luke 2). Let us do likewise, put aside all profane delights, all worldly pleasures, and let us go over to Bethlehem and witness the solemn ceremonies. Let us withdraw as much as possible from all worldly business and give more time to the service of God. If our hearts are filled with secular things, schemes of ambition, desires of wealth, etc., how will there be a place for Christ? Was not Christ excluded from Bethlehem because there was no place in the inn? And why was the altar of holocaust hollow within, unless that we should learn to make room in our hearts for the reception of Christ?

We should carefully observe the fast prescribed, and also truly deny ourselves some of those things that delight the palate; and if we are possessed of an abundance, give freely to the poor.

II. A brass lavatory, that is, the sacrament of Penance. In this the priests first should wash, then the faithful, who, in a manner, can be called priests and who become partakers in the mysteries of Christ, before they approach the sacrifice and Communion; for this reason the lavatory was placed in the entrance. Formerly holy water was placed in

front of the churches so that the Christians about to communicate might wash their hands, which were to hold the Body of Christ. Since, however, we now no longer receive Christ in our hands but only in the mouth, it suffices for us to cleanse the mouth by a sincere confession and by this means the conscience, because through the mouth we transmit the holy Eucharist to the heart. To this the Church invites us these days, while she assigns three or four weeks before Christmas for us to carefully examine our consciences and prepare ourselves for the worthy reception of the Bread of Life. "He made also the laver of brass, with the foot thereof, of the mirrors of the women that watched at the door of the tabernacle" (Exod. 38 : 8). The women held these mirrors so that the priests could see if there were any stains on themselves. St. Gregory says : "These mirrors are the precepts of God, in which holy souls always see themselves, and, if they discover any stains, they wash them away, for they know what is pleasing to God and what displeasing. And not without reason are they called mirrors of women, for women are so given to behold themselves in the mirror, to discover the slightest flaw in their appearance, so the examination of conscience should be carefully made to see if there be any stain of sin, and, if so, to wash it away in penance.

The example of the patriarch Jacob invites us. When he was ordered by God to go up to Bethel and there build an altar, he called his household together and commanded them to destroy their strange gods, to wash themselves and to change their clothing. So let every Christian who is called at this time to Bethlehem make an altar of his heart, and call his household together, his will, memory and intellect, his five senses, and if he finds anything contrary to God, let him destroy it. The great St. Augustine on this very Sunday thus addressed his hearers : "With the greatest devotion and with all our energies, we should prepare for this holy and desirable, this glorious and singular solemnity—the birth of Christ ; and we should most carefully examine ourselves and see if there be any hidden sin which is silently gnawing our conscience, and which is offensive to the eyes of the Divine Majesty." Although Christ after his passion rose and ascended into heaven, he watches carefully how each one of his servants, without avarice, pride, and anger, strives to prepare to celebrate his birth ; and according as he sees each one

adorned with good works will he dispense to him the grace of his mercy. If he should see one drunk, avaricious, or proud, I fear lest he would say what he said in the gospel: "Friend, how have you come here, not having a nuptial garment?" and then, "Let him be bound hand and foot and cast into exterior darkness." Let each one then carefully prepare by a good confession to go to Bethlehem.

If one is invited to a friend's wedding, how careful he is to appear in his best; what should one do when he is about to meet his Lord and Saviour?

III. The candlestick of many branches signifies the light of consideration which during these days should burn in our hearts, that we may fully penetrate the excellency and the magnitude of the benefit of the Incarnation. For this reason, during Advent, the Church begins the divine office with these words: "Come, let us adore the Lord the King to come." She proposes the gospels about the forerunner of Christ because he was a burning light; and so she announces to us the magnitude of the King to come, and places before us the figures of this mystery and the prophecies of the Old Testament. The seven branches of the candlestick represent seven circumstances of this benefit: 1. Who will come? He who is the Son of God. Who is not astounded? If he had sent one of the lowest order of angels to liberate us, his enemies, would it not have been more than enough? 2. Whence will he come? From the highest heavens—from a royal throne—from the bosom of the Father—from the company of myriads of angels. 3. Whither will he come? Into this world—this valley of tears—this prison of captives—into the region of the shadow of death—into the pool of Siloe filled with the suffering and afflicted. 4. To whom will he come? To exiles cast out of the garden of Paradise—to his enemies, slaves of the devil. 5. How will he come? "Being in the form of God, he debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men and in shape found as a man" (Philip. 2). If to free a slave from death an earthly monarch should descend from his throne and become a slave, would not the world wonder? But far greater was God's descent, which no one could merit. It would have been the greatest of all, if in a glorious visible form he had wished to illumine the earth by his presence. 6. Why will he come? To free us from the power of darkness—to seek his lost sheep—to place him on his shoulder and bring

him back to the fold—as a Master to teach us—to give us an example in the pursuit of virtue—to make us his sons and heirs. 7. When did he come? "When the night is in the midst of her course" (Wisdom 18). When the human race was in the densest darkness of ignorance and the whole world was in odium.

IV. The altar of incense on which incense was burned to God, signifies the vows and pious desires with which the advent of Christ should be desired, that he would be born in us and abide with us. As Christ's coming was formerly wished and desired by the Prophets and Patriarchs, so he wishes to be desired by us, that through his grace he may come to us. The Church warns us of this when for eight days before the birth she repeats: "O Wisdom come to teach us the way of prudence—O Adonai, come to redeem us—O Root of Jesse, come to free us—O Key of David, come to liberate us—O Orient, come to illumine us seated in darkness—O King of races, O Emmanuel, come to us," etc.

In the first place, the faithful should desire Christ to come to them in the Holy Eucharist, for those who truly love rejoice in the presence of the one loved, and desire him. To this we should bend all our energy, if we wish to profit with great fruit by the coming of Christ, that is, with great hunger, to seek him, for "he has filled the hungry with good things." Let us consider the magnitude of this Guest, his dignity, sweetness, beauty, riches—our poverty and weakness. How the Patriarchs and Prophets desired the coming of Christ!

Did not "Abraham rejoice to see that day"?—"Many kings and prophets wished to see and did not see." How the afflicted tried to come to Christ and touch only the hem of his garment! Was not the paralytic let down through the roof and placed at the feet of Jesus? All who had a great desire to come to Christ were healed. Behold the birds of the air—see the young with open mouths in their nest waiting food from the parent! Would that we could feel our want—with what appetite we would hasten to Communion, and with what fruit we would come back!

V. The table to receive the twelve loaves of propitiation bread signifies, first, almsgiving, which we should specially indulge in during these days to conciliate Christ in his poor. As we show ourselves to the members of Christ, so will he show himself to us. St. Augustin says: "What vanity lost

by the palate, let justice through mercy bestow on the poor—what luxury squandered in this world, let piety restore in heaven, and although we should always give alms, especially during these occasions let us give more freely according to our means. It is not just that some during this holy season should be filled to satiety and others suffering from hunger."

Since all are the servants of one God, redeemed with the one price, we have entered this world in the same condition, in the same we will leave it, and if we live righteous lives we shall equally share the same beatitude. And why does not the poor with you receive bread, since with you he will receive the kingdom? Why does not the poor receive an old garment, since with you he will receive the stole of immortality? Why is not the poor worthy of your bread, since with you he has been worthy to receive the Sacrament of Baptism? Why is he unworthy to receive the crumbs from your table, since he has been invited to the banquet of Angels?

Let us, therefore, during this season be kind and charitable to the poor.

Secondly, a preparation for Holy Communion. That indeed was a precious table made of Setim wood, which did not easily decay, and which was superior in solidity and beauty to all other woods. It was inlaid with gold because it was to bear the holy breads. So should our heart be made of Setim wood, that is, a firm resolution to amend our lives, and to this end it should be covered and adorned with the golden virtues of faith, hope, charity, humility, etc. And then that Bread of Life which descends from heaven can be placed in it. These are the things we must do if we wish to prepare for the coming of Christ. It would be better not to receive him than to receive him without honor. "Thou has multiplied the nation, and hast not increased the joy" (Isaias 9 : 3). In other words: Thou hast illumined many with the splendor of thy nativity, but because many excluded that light, thou hast experienced little joy. The same thing happens if, during these days, many approach Holy Communion—a few only properly prepared—a great nation, not a great joy. That we may add a great joy to a great nation, let there be a great preparation.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE CHEAPNESS OF MAN.

I. Man is a stranger and a wanderer. II. The guest of a day. III. A blade of grass. IV. A leaf, fearful of uncertain life. V. A fleeing or inconstant shadow. VI. A Universal Vanity.

"Who art thou?" (John 1 : 22).

THE Delphian philosophers, not without reason, ordered to be inscribed in letters of gold in the temple of Apollo the words: "Know thyself." This warning was such as of itself to inspire men to strive after happiness. "To know oneself," says St. Clement (Book 3 Ped.), "is the greatest and most beautiful of sciences." St. Bernard, in Med. C. 3, says: "Study to know yourself, for it is much better and more praiseworthy to know yourself than neglecting yourself, you should know the course of the stars, the growth of the plants, the nature of man and beast, the science of things heavenly and earthly." There is nothing very many know so little about or care to know, as themselves. Plato says: "There is scarcely one in ten who knows himself." They simply ask of others, "Who art thou?" Astronomers ask of the heavens, philosophers of nature, lawyers of law, doctors of sickness, the curious of the world. Let us not be so blind, but rather send our ambassadors, the intellect and senses, not to others, but to ourselves, and ask of ourselves the question, "Who art thou?" "I am a voice," replies John. What more fitting answer could he give? For what is a voice? Something flowing which flies from place to place; something momentary which suddenly perishes; something weak which is easily taken unawares; something valueless which returns to nothing; something rough which

has no signification ; something unsteady which decreases by degrees ; something blind which knows not whither it goes. Such is man. Therefore,

I. Who art thou ? David answers : "I am a stranger with thee, O Lord, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Ps. 38 : 13). St. Chrysostom says : "David was a great man who abounded in glory and wealth, and yet he called himself a stranger and wanderer." In so much only was the king loved by God as he was a wanderer on earth : by what reason then shall we call ourselves citizens ? We are wanderers because one after the other we depart hence ; we migrate from age to age. Like all the stars that come from the East, although they are possessed of great brightness, nevertheless they tend to the West, and there, according to different circles, some more slowly, some more swiftly, they hide themselves from our view ; so also men. The stars seem to us to remain immovable, when, however, they travel most swiftly ; so also the days of man, as Job says, "are swifter than a courier." "They have passed by as ships carrying fruits, as an eagle flying to the prey" (Job 9 : 26). No matter how fast a courier may hasten, yet at times he must rest ; but our years do not rest for a single moment. For when we wish to rest in sleep, we do not rest ; but like those sleeping in a ship, we are borne to our death. If, therefore, O man, you are not a citizen of this world, but a stranger and a wanderer, why do you build for yourself as though you were to remain here forever ? What means this accumulation of riches ? this desire for honors ? this love of fine clothes ? What would you say of a traveler who, knowing that he should constantly hasten to his country, in the meantime would invest in houses and lands ? Would you not advise him rather to buy gems and precious stones which he could bring to his home ? For this reason St. Peter admonishes us : "Dearly beloved : I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires" (1 Pet. 2 : 11). Let us as merchants buy what we can bring to heaven, good works—precious gems of virtues.

II. Who art thou ? "A guest of one day," says Wisdom (5 : 15). Cicero says the life of man is like a guest. He comes to-day, enjoys himself, and departs on the morrow. When a traveler stops at a hotel (in Europe), he is asked what time he is to be called, and what time the light is to be brought—so man is scarcely born when he is warned of his

death—for in baptism, the lighted candle is placed in his hands, warning him to be like the prudent virgins, to be always ready for the last summons. In matrimony we have the words: "Till death do us part." What then are you? "A guest of one day." How is this shown?

First—Many are sound and healthy to-day—to-morrow they shall be borne to the grave. I am not so old, and yet how many such have I seen? How many have I heard that others saw? How often has the blushing bride received her first kiss from death—her orange-blossoms changed to a funeral wreath—her wedding robe to a shroud!

Secondly—How small a portion of time belongs to life, if you take away what belongs to death! Childhood and youth are not considered the life of man—they are the life of little birds; besides, sleep consumes a third part of our lives, and is called by poets "the brother of death." How much of life is taken up with cares, trials and afflictions, so that one who lives to seventy can scarcely count twenty of them life.

Thirdly—If we compare this life with eternity, it will appear but a day; and truly our life may be likened to the fish called Day, because it lives but a day, according to Albertus Magnus. How little do we think of the loss of a day! And yet to that fish a day is everything. Although the compass of the heavens seems so immense, yet it perfects its course in one day; so man with his life. Life is but a little while, as Christ says: "A little while and you shall not see me." Although you may live a long time and possess the goods of earth, not more than one day at a time is granted you; only one now for your consolation; for to-morrow you have not—yesterday still less, for you had it, and of to-day you cannot have more than a single instant at once. If you have great wealth, you cannot use it all at once. Such are things human and carnal, that before they have scarcely come they have vanished. If, therefore, you are a guest of only a day on this earth, why do you prefer momentary to eternal goods? If a guest for a day, why for a little pleasure do you purchase eternal torments? If a guest for a day, why are you impatient in carrying your cross? Why do you not make the best use of time preparing for eternity?

III. Who art thou? "All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field" (Isaias 40:6). What is more perishable than grass? What more feeble than a

flower? In heat they languish; in cutting they die. The most delightful thing is a green meadow, the most beautiful is a flower; but that matters little, because when you take it in your hands it withers. "The grass is withered and the flower is fallen because the spirit of the Lord has blown upon it" (Isaias 40 : 7).

The same author also says that the life of man is more frail than the flower or anything else. Glass is frail, but with care it may be kept a long time; but man, no matter how he is kept, cannot last. The vase is fragile, but it is not broken by the mere touch; but man perishes by one poisonous touch, one bite of a reptile. The flower is frail, but it is not destroyed by one gust of wind; man is destroyed by one breath of disease. A bubble is frail, but it is not burst by a look; yet man often succumbs to a poisonous look and dies. A pestilential odor, an infectious air, a torrid sun, a sharp winter, often take away life. If you ask of what did So-and-so die, you will be told a drink of ice-water, a sunstroke, from fear, from grief, a few drops of poison, a bone in the throat, the bite of a dog, etc., etc., etc.

Why do clocks stop so often? A wheel is out of order. If this happens in works of brass, how much more easily in the delicate mechanism of the human frame? If, then, O man, you are but a blade of grass, a flower, why do you not provide before death cuts you down? Why do you sleep so long in your sins? Why do you put off repentance? If, while standing on a frozen lake, the ice should suddenly give way beneath your feet and you were immersed in the water, would you not cry out for help and seek to be saved, since death was staring you in the face? You surely would not laugh and jest. Why not then, during life, seek help in penance, since in a most frail body you see yourself daily in danger of death, and nothing between it and you but thin ice?

IV. Who art thou? "A leaf that is carried away with the wind" (Job 13 : 25); that is, living an uncertain and doubtful life. As a leaf always trembles on a tree, and at length falls or is torn from it, so the life of man always fluctuates, and in course of time is either violently taken away or quietly ceases. Solomon says: "Man knoweth not his own end; but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them" (Ecclesiastes 9 : 12). Another wise man says man is a bubble, frail and evanescent.

Some linger a while and then vanish to be succeeded by others at intervals. Among men, some die before birth, some in infancy, some in childhood, some in old age. Some die suddenly, some by fire, some by sword, etc, etc. If, therefore, the end of life is so uncertain, what rashness for us to go on unmindful of the words of Christ: "Watch, because you know not the day nor the hour" (Matt. 24).

Why is it that during war sentries are on guard day and night? To watch for the enemy. And we are waging a continual war for a heavenly crown, and are our sentries always on guard?—the five senses watching for our arch enemy, the devil?

V. Who art thou? A fleeing shadow, "Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow" (Job 14:2). For as a shadow now is great, now medium, now small, and is nothing; so man now is well, now sick, now joyful, now sad, now quiet, now disturbed, now doubtful, now certain, now timid, now bold; now he laughs, now he weeps, now he wills, now he does not will. As the shadow before noon falls on the right of one facing the meridian, and after noon on the left, so man in the morning is good, and in the afternoon perchance becomes bad, and so will stand on the left of God. As the shadow precedes one receding from the sun, and follows one approaching it, so man in this life, now is exalted and precedes others, again he is humbled and follows others. Among the Romans, a rod and bell were attached to the victor's car, and a crier followed calling out: "Look behind thee, remember you are a man," to admonish him that should he fall from his high state, he was liable to be put to death if he did not watch himself.

The poets say that all men hang from the threads of the fates; some from strong, others from weak ones; some from a great height, others nearer the earth; that is the common lot of all, for the threads to be cut, with this distinction, that the higher one hangs, the greater the tumult caused by his fall. This changeableness and inconstancy of man is known not only by those who serve the world, but even by the Saviour himself, who despised the world. When entering Jerusalem, he was received with loud acclaim; in the evening he was deserted. The people went before him with green branches, and four days after with these same branches dried they struck him; they spread their garments in his way, and afterwards stripped him of his own to scourge and

to crucify him. They cried out: "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord," and shortly after they called for his death: "Crucify him!"

VI. Who art thou? Universal vanity. "And indeed all things are vanity; every man living" (Ps. 38 : 6). Man is all vanity, for whatever defects are found in other creatures, they are all found in man. All the imperfections of animate and inanimate creation are found in him. He suffers from heat and cold; he hungers and thirsts, feels grief and pain. One dies on account of sin, another despair, another grief, another too much joy, another hunger, another fleeing from danger, another seeking dignities, another in battle, another in sleep, another from cold, another from heat, etc., etc.

Every man is vanity. The king, surrounded by his subjects, the rich reveling in his wealth, the poor begging for bread, the wise man and the ignorant, the strong and the weak. St. Jerome says: "If every man standing and living is vanity, what about the man falling and dying and dead?"

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

THE PRECIOUS DEATH OF THE JUST.

I. The just freely die. II. They do not dread judgment. III. They joyfully enter heaven.

"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6).

THAT which Isaias foretold in to-day's Gospel has already taken place: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God"; but it will happen again. It happened in the first coming of Christ, when all who wished saw Christ with their corporal eyes. It will happen again in his second coming, with this distinction, however: The just shall see him with the greatest rejoicing; the wicked with the deepest sorrow. St. Gregory says: "When the heavens are opened, Christ shall appear on his throne of majesty surrounded by ministering angels with his apostles; all the elect and reprobate alike shall see him—the just rejoicing in the gift of heavenly rewards without end; the unjust groaning in punishment forever. The same saint says that "the second coming of Christ is represented by that angel who, as a witness of the resurrection of Christ, terrified by the lightning of his countenance the guards of the tomb, and gladdened by his snow-white garments the holy women, according to Matt. 28:3, "And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow." In lightning there is the terror of fear; in snow the allurement of beauty; as in the general resurrection Christ will come with the same countenance. "A column of fire by night preceded the people in the desert, and a column of cloud by day." In fire there is terror, in cloud a gentle blandishment of vision; day is the life of the just;

night the life of the sinner. Paul says to converted sinners: "You were darkness before, now you are light in the Lord." During the day the column was shown by a cloud; during the night by fire; because the mighty God will appear kind to the just and terrible to the wicked; kind to those dying well; terrible to those dying without repentance." Thus St. Gregory.

There are three gates through which the just enter when they leave this world: the gate of death, the gate of judgment, and the gate of heaven. Through the first they enter freely, the second confidently, the third joyfully. In the first gate, the love of the world could deter one, the desire of living, worldly cares, the snares of the devil; in the second, the fear of judgment; in the third, the fear of hell; but none of these disturb the just.

First—Through the first gate they freely enter, because there is nothing in this world they loved so much that they were not always ready to lose. Whatever they had in the world no more clung to them than a garment which is easily cast off without any regret. It is one thing to cast off the flesh of the body, another to cast off a garment; this is done without grief, the former not without great torture. Those tied to the world, when they die, cast it off as though it were their very skin. How great will be their grief!

"Oh death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man that hath peace in his possessions" (Eccle. 41 : 1). On the other hand, those who love nothing in this world will find no more trouble in laying aside worldly goods than they would an old garment.

When Cardinal Pole heard that Henry the Eighth had set fifty thousand pieces of gold as a price on his head, he wondered at the insanity of the king, since he himself was tired of this life, and would as willingly lay it down as he would an old garment. St. Ambrose, speaking of the words, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," says: "What dead one can die? No one, unless he has received a soul beforehand. Those truly are blessed and those dead die in the Lord, who die to the world first, and then to the flesh."

Secondly—Because they have fulfilled the days which they found full of miseries in this world. Whichever way they turned, they found calamities on all sides; offenses against God, oppressions of the poor, daily funerals; groans of the poor, quarrels of the rich; enmities and strife.

St. John (1 Epist. 5 : 19) says : "They see the world seated in wickedness;" that is, filled with every crime, where either the wicked only are, or the good are harassed by evils.

Abraham is said to have died full of days, having had enough of living, and desiring to be dissolved. Jacob said : "The days of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years, few and evil" (Gen. 47 : 9) ; that is, full of bitterness, trials and temptations. On the other hand, the wicked never die full of days ; and not in their time, as the Wise man says, for there never is a suitable time for them to die.

St. Augustine says : "There are men who die with patience ; but they are perfect, since they live in patience. He who desires that life, when the day of death shall come, patiently tolerates death ; but he who desires to be dissolved and be with Christ does not die patiently, but lives patiently, and dies with the greatest delight."

Thirdly—Because they pass from labor to repose, from war to peace. Not without reason is death often called sleep by the apostles, and by Christ himself when he said that Lazarus and the girl were only sleeping. Also by St. Luke when he wrote that St. Stephen had gone to sleep, and also commonly called by the Christians, who name their burial places cemeteries, that is, dormitories. As one after a day's labor gently rests in sleep, so the saints, after the trying labors of life, in death rest as in sleep. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors" (Apoch. 14 : 13).

"Sleep is sweet to a laboring man whether he eat little or much ; but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep" (Ecclesiastes 5 : 11).

In like manner the sleep of death is sweet to the just man working well, fatigued by labors, be he rich or poor. To those who do not labor it is difficult and restless. Nor is peace less welcome to the just after so many wars of temptations, who are never out of battle ; for they have either external enemies or, where they are wanting, internal ones. "Let peace come, let him rest in his bed that hath walked in his uprighteousness" (Isaias 57 : 2).

This we ask when we pray for the dead : "May they rest in peace." The just eagerly look forward to this peace, since it puts an end to all their struggles.

Fourthly—Because liberated from prison they fly like

little birds to liberty, for the body and the world is a prison to them.

There were two captives in the prison of Pharao, a baker and a cup-bearer, and they were both led forth to torments and death. As different was the leaving of each one, so the will of each was different. The baker went forth unwillingly, for he dreamed that he would become the food of crows ; the cup-bearer went forth rejoicing, for he dreamed that he would be restored to his former dignity. So the just willingly "shuffle off this mortal coil," but the wicked with horror and trembling, and only by force. The reason is because the just dream that they will enter into eternal joys, the wicked that they will descend into hell and become sport for the demons : so that sinners, like pigs, must be forced to die. On the contrary, the just are said to prepare for death like Jacob. "He drew up his feet upon the bed and died" (Gen. 49 : 32).

God said to Moses, the figure of Christ on Calvary : "Go up into this mountain, and die thou in the mountain" (Deut. 32 : 49). He did not say thou shalt die, but *die*. In like manner St. John entered his tomb ; St. Peter asked to be released from prison, St. Paul to be dissolved, and St. Francis, in the words of the Psalmist, "Deliver me from this prison to confess thy name ; the just wait for me until thou hast rewarded me."

Fifthly—Because they die in peace and great tranquillity of mind. They do not fear the snares of the demons, because they have nothing that can be taken from them. St. Hilarion, falling among robbers, had nothing to fear, because he did not possess anything. So that the just man at the hour of death does not fear the devils, because he is free from sin and all earthly affections. Finally, temporal cares and disturbances of the mind do not oppress them as they do sinners ; so that, like Moses and Aaron, they die on the mountain, that is, in a quiet and peaceful mind ; the wicked, on the contrary, die in the valley of tears, of troubles and temptations. Hence many holy men die while singing. Simeon the just man, having seen the Lord, wishing to die, nay, as though already dying, sang : "Now dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace."

St. Bernard's brother Gerard, when dying, sang the words : "Praise the Lord of the heavens, praise him in the highest," according to St. Bernard himself, in his funeral oration.

Blessed Peter Celestine, having resigned the Pontificate, while dying sang the Psalm : "Let every spirit praise the Lord."

Sixthly—Because they suffer the pains of death with resignation. They are replenished with divine consolations by which God brings aid to them on their bed of suffering. "Thou has turned all his couch into his sickness" (Ps. 40 : 4). He turns the couch by bringing consolation to the sick.

By virtue of the suffrages of the Church and of the sacraments, and the more fertile the soil on which they fall, the greater will be the fruit reaped. Possibly David foresaw this when he said : "By the fruit of their corn, their wine and oil, they are multiplied" (Ps. 4 : 8) ; in other words, by the fruit of the Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction, they are strengthened or grow so that they long for the embrace of death.

II. *First*—They enter the second gate with confidence, because they sleep in the Lord, that is, in grace, and, as it were, in the bosom of God, their friend. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

The angel, having frightened the guards at the tomb of Christ, spoke to the women saying : "Fear ye not!" as though he would say : "Let them fear who do not like the advent of heavenly messengers ; let them fear who, weighed down with carnal desires, despair of ever entering the society of the blessed ; but you, why do you fear since you behold your heavenly companions?" So the just will have nothing to fear when they approach Christ their judge. If those coming home at night fear not when they can say to the guards : "Friends, we are your friends," so those coming to the gates of heaven, if they can say to the blessed : "We are your friends," will have nothing to fear.

Secondly—Because they know that they shall not appear in the presence of God empty-handed, but full of good works. They die full of days, like Abraham, because, says St. Ambrose: "The life of the just has fulness, but the days of the wicked are empty." As Jacob sent gifts of sheep and cows to his brother Esau coming on the way, to appease him, so will the just send good works to meet Christ, the first-born, coming to judge us. Good works precede and follow the just to judgment ; precede with merit, follow with reward. Hence St. John : "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for their works follow them"—like servants attending their master. Esau, seeing his brother's household, his power and munificence, runs to embrace him ; so

Christ will do with his servants—nay, his brothers. There the angels with all splendor shall exhibit the works of the just to Christ.

III. Joyfully they enter through the third gate. They shall pass from a severe winter to a most delightful spring, for the Lord compares that time of transition to spring: "Now learn a parable from the fig-tree; when its branch is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So also you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24).

They cross the Jordan into Palestine; that is, the river of judgment, into the land of the living. St. Bernard calls the death of the just the "Pasch, or Passover, because they die to the world that they may live to God."

Because they pass from labor to reward; from the battle to victory and triumph; from sowing to harvest. "The life of man upon earth is a warfare, and his days are like the days of a hireling. As a servant longeth for the shade, and as the hireling looketh for the end of his work, so I also have had empty mouths, and have numbered to myself wearisome nights" (Job 7:1–3).

St. Jerome says: "What a glorious day, when the Mother of the Lord, accompanied by a chorus of virgins, shall meet you, when after the Red Sea, and the horse and the rider have been submerged, she shall go before you with timbrel and song: "Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously honored, he has cast the horse and the rider into the sea!" Then joyful Theckla shall fly to your embrace. Then the bridegroom himself shall meet you, saying: "Arise, come, my precious one, my dove, because the winter is passed, and storms have disappeared." Then the angels shall say: "Who is he that, looking like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, elevated as the sun?" Then the daughters and the queens shall praise you. Then the little ones of whom the Saviour spoke by Isaias: "Behold, I and my little ones, whom the Lord gave me, bearing palms of victory, shall sing: 'Hosanna in the highest: blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.'" As often as vain ambition of the world shall delight you, as often as you see anything glorious in this world, go in spirit to paradise, begin to be what you will be, and you will hear from your spouse. "Place me as a bower in your heart, as a seal on your arm" (Canticle of Canticles).

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS OR THE NEW YEAR'S DAY.

THE DIGNITY AND THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS—THE AVOIDING THE ABUSE OF IT.

I. A name full of mysteries. II. A precious name. III. A saving name. IV. A holy name. V. A terrible name.

"His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel, before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2 : 21).

If any one receives a valuable gift from a dignitary—for instance a precious ring—he guards it very carefully, places it in an ornate and strong box, wears it and exhibits it with great pride. Thus Moses did when he received the heavenly manna from the hands of angels. He placed a portion of it in the tabernacle as a perpetual memorial and for the constant adoration of his people (Exod. 16). Likewise, when he received the tables of the law from God on Mount Sinai, he framed an ark of setim-wood overlaid with purest gold within and without, and there placed them to be preserved with becoming honor (Exod. 25). We have received from God a most valuable gift—a gift above all gifts, the soul-saving name Jesus, which, although belonging to our Divine Redeemer alone, is communicated to us also. Where is the comparison between the manna, the tables of the law and the name Jesus? "Your fathers ate manna and are dead; this is the bread of life coming down from heaven; if any man eat of this he shall not die" (John 6). The tables of Moses contained the law of God—the name Jesus contains the Lawgiver Himself. The manna and tables were delivered by the hands of angels—the name Jesus was selected by God and announced to us by an angel (Luke 11). We should, therefore, most carefully guard this noblest of names,

and pronounce it with the greatest reverence. To this the Evangelist adverts in the words of the text. He wishes to say that the mouth pronouncing the name Jesus should be angelical—as it passed first from the mind of God into the mind of the angel, thence into the ears of the most holy Virgin Mary. Therefore the breast in which that name is preserved ought to be most pure and most richly adorned; the mouth which speaks it ought to be an ark of setim-wood overlaid with the purest gold within and without.

I. It is a name in Greek and Hebrew full of mysteries and of wisdom. It establishes us in faith and in every action in faith because it teaches us the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Incarnation. Of the Trinity, as the four-lettered Jehova is the name of God signifying three persons and one Godhead. The first letter is Iod—beginning, and signifies Father; the second is He—life, and signifies Son, because "in him there was life" says St. John; the third Vau—link, and signifies Holy Spirit, who is the link binding Father and Son; the fourth He again, and signifies the unity of essence; so in the name Jesus the first is Iod, signifying Father; the second Schin, representing the Word; the third Vau, representing the Holy Ghost; the fourth Ain—fountain, representing the Deity, which is the perennial fountain of all those relations and ideas, nay more, of all things.

It teaches the mystery of the Incarnation, because it signifies Saviour and hence God Incarnate, for neither God alone nor man alone could properly be the Saviour. Not God alone, for then there would be no one to whom he could offer atonement; not man alone, for he could not have the means for atonement. Saviour, not as regards one kind only or imperfect redemption, justification and glorification, but all kinds and perfect in every way.

The name Jesus, therefore, signifies the most acceptable combination of the Divine nature with the human which the whole world needed so much and which the Prophets so earnestly longed for, as the Spouse in the Canticles says: "Who shall give thee to me for my brother?" (8:1). The other names of God signify Creator—Being of beings—Judge, etc.; but the name Jesus—God our Brother, Redeemer, Justifier, Glorifier. It teaches us to direct all our actions, with Christ as our Leader, to our eternal salvation. "All, whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Coloss. 3:17). Poets tell that

Ariadne gave Theseus a thread for a guide lest in wandering in the labyrinth he should be lost. The world indeed is a real labyrinth beset with many and varied dangers, so that if we do not wish to err, if we do not wish to fall from justice and glory, let us carefully study what helps us to our salvation, let us follow God. When we pray, let us pray in the name of Jesus. When we desire anything, let us ask for it if it conduces to our salvation. Therefore, since this name is so full of mysteries and saving doctrines it is to be devoutly kissed. If St. Thomas Aquinas did not hesitate to say that he would not exchange St. Chrysostom's book on Matthew for the city of Paris, how much more should we venerate the name Jesus which St. Paul confessed (1 Corinthians, 2 : 2,) was all that he knew.

II. It is a precious name. "For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. 6 :20). So is the name Jesus bought by Christ at a great price ;—glorify therefore, and bear it with the greatest love and veneration. For as Jacob was no sooner called Israel, that is, seeing God, when he wrestled with the angel and was wounded by him ;—so Christ was no sooner called Jesus, that is, Saviour, than he was wounded by circumcision and shed his most precious blood for us. Although he lost then but a small quantity, yet it was sufficient for our redemption ; besides it was a pledge of a more copious redemption to be shown by his atonement and death, hence buying the name at the highest possible price. If Alexander, wounded at the siege of Sicyon, on seeing the blood oozing from his body, exclaimed : "How dearly have you bought a renowned name !" with how much more justice could Christ nailed to the cross say the same thing ? Who does not know how much more honorable are those names bought by virtue than those acquired by heredity—as the name Germanicus, which Justinian acquired by conquering Germany ; Africanus, which Scipio acquired by conquering Africa. So also the name Jesus, which Christ acquired through his passion and our liberation, for he no sooner received it than he began to suffer. Therefore, Christ is to be more glorified in the name Jesus than if he were simply called the Son of God—or the God of armies—the mighty Jehovah, etc., for these he has received by heredity—the former through the shedding of his most precious blood for us. When prostrate Saul asked the Lord who he was, he did not reply : "I am who I

am—or I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—but I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." If there is greater glory in the name Jesus, it surely follows that it is a greater crime to abuse that name. If a precious balsam, ointment or oil, or such as is distilled from gems and pearls, be of such great value as to be kept in gold and silver vases and given drop by drop to the sick, how much more valuable the name Jesus! "Thy name is as oil poured out" (Cant. 1). Oil indeed drawn from the crucible of the cross; dripping from the wounds and members of Christ; poured out, because offered and given copiously to the whole world to drink.

But where Christ should receive more honor, there he receives less—the more copiously that precious oil is poured out the more it is despised and uttered by the mouths of men in ribald jokes and jests, detractions and blasphemies, as if it cost Christ nothing. "I am poured out as water" (Ps. 21 : 15).

III. It is a salutary name. "For there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved" (St. Peter, Acts 4 : 12). "Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners" (Tim. 1 : 15). Although, before the time of Christ, many were called by that name, not, however, as Christ, because neither by an angel nor by reason that they were to save a people from their sins, as the angel had told of Christ; but on account of some temporal power which placed them over the people, as Joshua, because he was the future ruler of Israel and was to lead the people into the land of promise;—Joseph, because he had saved a multitude of men from hunger and famine; but Christ came to lead us to heaven and free us from the pains of hell. When Joseph appeared in royal state, announced by a herald, because he had freed Egypt from the danger of famine, in such great reverence was he held that, wherever he went, all the people bent the knee before him (Gen. 41). What should we do when it is proclaimed to us that our true and only Saviour is being borne along in that royal carriage of the name Jesus? "In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth" (Philip. 2 : 10). If the angelic choirs and the cohorts of demons, who were not redeemed by Christ as we were, bend the knee at the sound of that name, and adore it, what must be said of men who, when hearing it, not only do not adore it, but bring ridicule on it? Certainly they must

count their salvation of little worth while they so hypocritically carry their Saviour. As a person with a new garment, careless of its value, throws it here and there, unmindful of the cleanness or filth of the place, so does he act who carries the Salutary name with him. The name Jesus is the garment of our salvation, in which only we can be pleasing to God, according to St. Paul: "For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3 : 27). That garment is so precious as to have cost the blood of Christ. Whoever, therefore, despises it cannot fully realize its value. "You are bought with a great price, glorify and carry God in your body."

IV. It is a holy name. "Holy and terrible is his name" (Ps. 110). He was so announced by the angel to Mary (Luke 1). "And, therefore, also, the Holy, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." For this reason the blind man, having once called Jesus Son of David, did not repeat that sacred name, but was content with saying: "Son of David, have mercy on me."

As the image of a king is to be honored because it represents a king, so also is the name of God to be honored because it represents God. It was the custom among some races to place the letters from their king upon their head and fall on their knees through respect. The Angles, with bowed heads and modest demeanor, paid homage to the empty thrones of their kings. St. Chrysostom says: "Among the Jews the name of God was so sacred that, as it was written on pieces of metal, no one was allowed to carry them around unless the high priest; now, indeed, we all carry that name as if it were something common." No one but the high priest, and that only once a year, dared pronounce that name; and when the people heard him, they prostrated themselves on the ground, and whenever they met with it in the sacred writings, on account of their veneration, they never pronounced it, but said only Adonai. But the name Jesus represents to us not only the divinity, but also the humanity of God, and thence the benefit of the Incarnation, and in very truth more than the four-lettered Hebrew Jehovah. The Romans considered it a crime to take the names of their tutelary gods, as Plutarch writes. It would be a crime against injured majesty for one to treat without respect the image of his king; but a greater crime is it to profane with our lips the most sacred name of God—Jesus.

St. Chrysostom says: "Do you know what God is and how he should be called? Now how do we use the name which is to be honored above all names, which is the sweetest to all on earth, which terrifies the listening demons?"

What shall we say of those people who stand with awe in the presence of an earthly ruler and pronounce his name with reverence, and when they hear the name Jesus spoken treat it with contumely, as something filthy and vile?

V. It is a terrible name. Terrible to the demons, who on hearing it flee and tremble. Terrible to all its enemies, as Saul discovered when on his way to Damascus to bind all who invoked that name (Acts 9). He fully understood for the first time what kind of name it was when, prone on the earth, he heard: "I am Jesus whom you persecute." Terrible, finally, to all who irreverently use it and take it in vain, as we read in Deuteronomy 5: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for he shall not be unpunished that taketh his name upon a vain thing." What an appendage of threatening did God place as he foresaw how prone men would be to this vice, how very common would be the irreverence for this divine name; therefore, to deter them, he added threats to his commands. Wisely does Ecclesiasticus admonish us: "Make a balance for thy tongue;" to weigh, as it were, the words before they leave the mouth, so that we may escape punishment, after the manner of bakers who are bound by law to weigh their loaves of bread before they place them in the oven, that they may be neither heavier nor lighter than is allowed. So ought we weigh our words before they are placed on the tongue and publicly uttered. Consider well how all your idle, jocose and irreverent words are weighed in God's balance and what punishment they deserve.

St. Chrysostom tells that a certain preacher, from force of habit, was continually moving his right shoulder, and to correct himself he placed a sharp sword on it, so that the fear of being wounded might prevent him from moving that member. Let us do likewise by placing the sword of God's punishment on the tongue, and thus break ourselves of that filthy and damnable habit of taking the holy name of Jesus in vain. It will not avail you to say that you do this by force of habit, and not with any bad intention, no more than it would excuse the thief, when caught, to say he stole from force of habit. The greater will be his crime the more he

has been accustomed to steal. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. For what things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap" (Gal. 6 : 7, 8). If, therefore, by your tongue you shall sow scurrilities, blasphemy, contempt of God and derision of divine things, you shall reap the derision of a deriding God.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTF EPIPHANY.

HOW MUST CHRIST OR HIS LOST GRACE BE SOUGHT?

I. The loss of Christ must be acknowledged. II. We must retrace our steps by the examination of conscience. III. We must grieve for the lost one by contrition. IV. We must return to Jerusalem by a firm purpose of amendment. V. Christ must be sought among the doctors by confession. VI. Three days of satisfaction must be spent. VII. When found, he must be carefully guarded.

"Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke 2 : 48).

THERE were two trees in Paradise, by which the life of man was to be either lost or preserved—the tree of death and the tree of life : no one was to die unless he had tasted of the tree of death ; no one was to be saved unless he had tasted of the tree of life. For a like reason there are in the Church two trees as it were, by which the grace of Christ is either lost or found—sin and penance ; Christ cannot be lost except through sin, nor once lost can he be found unless through penance.

I. The loss of Christ or his grace must be acknowledged ; sins must be acknowledged. The parents of Christ, although at first they did not notice his absence when they left Jerusalem, soon, however, perceived it during the homeward journey. For the same reason when we commit sin we do not ordinarily advert to the loss of Christ. Let us at least advert to it afterwards while we are in a position to merit, for when we come to judgment it will be of no avail to acknowledge sin. Unless we acknowledge it we will not seek Christ, for no one seeks that which he knows not he has

lost. Wisely Seneca remarks: "The knowledge of sin is the beginning of salvation, for he who does not know that he sins is unwilling to be corrected. You should discover before you amend." St. Bernard, in his epistle to Innocent, says: "He does not seek to be released who is ignorant of his captivity." If we do not seek to be released, we do not grieve that we are captives.

Secondly, if we do not acknowledge the loss of Christ we will not glorify God nor will we give thanks for graces received. For this reason Christ asked the blind man what was it he wished, so that before he could be cured he should acknowledge his blindness and the benefit of the cure. Many are spiritually blind and foolish because they do not see their defects. Seneca writes about his foolish wife Harpaste: "She does not know that she is blind, and she asks her preceptor to take her out for a walk, for, says she, 'it is dark.'" This same happens to us. No one believes himself avaricious—no one covetous. The blind seek a leader—we wander about without one, saying: "I am not ambitious, but nobody else can live in Rome; it is not my fault that I am passionate, for I have not yet reached a certain period of life; youth does these things." How we deceive ourselves! It is to be regretted that many live not only for a day but for a whole lifetime without Christ; they never advert to it, never say to themselves: "Is God with us or not?" Wherefore St. Gregory, commenting on Job 4, says that the wicked are consumed by their sins as a garment is consumed by a moth—without feeling. "They shall be consumed as by a moth." "A moth," he says, "does damage, but makes no noise; so the minds of the wicked, because they neglect to consider their iniquities, unknowingly lose their integrity." Therefore, do not expect help from Christ, if you do not know you are sick—do not think that you have found Christ, if you do not know that you have lost him.

II. We must return by the way we traveled without Christ, that is, our sinful life must be scrutinized by the examination of conscience. The parents of Christ, knowing him to be missing, came a day's journey and sought him among their relations and friends. In the same manner must you traverse the roads of your life on which you have walked, and examine the familiar places in which you have lived, the persons with whom you were accustomed to associate,—parents, relatives, friends and neighbors. Consider

what you said, what you did, what you thought; you must travel everywhere, saying with the Spouse in the Canticles: "I will rise and will go about the city, in the streets and the broad highways I will seek him whom my soul loveth." But what need, you will say, of such a rigid examination? Is it not enough, if I am ready to confess those sins which occur to my mind? By no means—for we must use all our endeavors to fathom the most secret sins in our heart, in order to detest them and avoid them for the future; for how can we entirely destroy that which we know not to be in us? When you have lost anything in the dark, you procure a light and search everywhere; you sweep the house as did the woman in the gospel, and you are not happy till you have found that which you had lost. If you knew there were thieves in your house you would not be satisfied with proclaiming the fact and berating them for their crime, but you would use your utmost endeavor either to banish them or to have them captured. Why do you not act in like manner with your soul? How can your confessor expel your enemies who are destroying your soul, if you hide them from him? If we wish to become worthy of the grace, friendship and espousals of God in very truth, we must wash away all the stains on our souls and become most pure and holy like Christ, the Spouse of our souls, and thus more pleasing to him. If maidens use every art to become more pleasing in the eyes of their affianced, what should we not do to make our souls acceptable to Christ, our heavenly Spouse? If they consume a whole day in adorning themselves, should we not likewise spend an entire day in examining our consciences? "His parents came a day's journey and they sought him sorrowing."

III. We must grieve for the loss of Christ by contrition. But why is contrition or sorrow and detestation of sin required? Is not charity, faith or mercy sufficient? These are not sufficient; for charity demands that we grieve for our offense and make reparation to our friend; faith demands that we seek a remedy through the virtue of Christ, that is, through the sacraments; mercy demands that each one alleviate his suffering through penance. Therefore, contrition is required, first, that by it and detesting our sins we may repair the injury done to God. Tyrants urged the Christians to detest Christ and his cross, and show themselves his enemies and their idols' friends. Thus

the king orders his subjects to break the treaty they had made with the enemy. Finally, with Job and Jeremiah, we curse the day we were born, that is, when we began to sin. Secondly, that by this grief we may revenge the sins in ourselves and strengthen our hatred toward them. For our heart is the source of sin and we afflict it as the culprit through sadness. For this reason the victorious commander orders all the fortresses in the captured towns to be destroyed. Thy heart, O Christian, was the redoubtable fortress from which you waged war against Almighty God; therefore it must be destroyed if you wish to recover lost grace.

IV. We must return to Jerusalem by a firm purpose of amendment. In this way, with the parents of Christ, we ascend to the heavenly Jerusalem, whence we descended, when we promise to return to the path of God's commandments, which we had before deserted; so that with the Prodigal Son we can say: "I will arise and go to my father." Through this firm purpose we retrace our steps, which were leading us to hell, and we continue on our journey to heaven. But what is the need of this firm purpose of amendment? First, that we may detest our sins and excite God's mercy, by which he will receive us into his grace; that, while we cannot offer him any past submission, at least we can offer future submission, as the debtor in the gospel, who was unable to pay the ten thousand talents because he had not them, promised to pay if his lord had patience. "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all" (Matt. 18). Unruly children about to be punished promise their parents that they will behave in the future and their promise is accepted.

Secondly, to prove to God that in the future we will not be enemies, but dutiful and obedient children. So the victors despoil the vanquished of their arms, if they receive them as hostages, and these swear never again to join their enemies. We read that Mary of Egypt, while yet a great sinner, by divine power was barred from entering the Temple of Jerusalem on the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, until she promised the Blessed Virgin that she would abandon her licentious life.

V. We must seek Christ in the temple among the doctors. Thus did his parents whom we will imitate if we hasten to church and tell our confessors, the doctors of the church, by what manner of sinning we have lost Christ. The Spouse seeking her beloved asks the guards of the city: "Have you

seen him whom my soul loveth ? When I had a little passed by them I found him whom my soul loveth." Likely the Blessed Virgin on reaching the gates of Jerusalem asked the guards if they had seen her Son passing through. On receiving a negative answer she entered the city and sought him in the temple in the midst of the doctors, the true guardians of the soul, not of the body, and they showed her Jesus. For this reason pastors and confessors are called guards of the soul. If, therefore, you wish to find Christ, you must seek him through his confessors. And as it is the duty of guards of the city to examine all as to whence they come and whither they go, so is it the office of confessors to examine those who wish to find Christ. But you may say, why should they know the secrets of my mind ? The answer is—Christ the Ruler of the Church so ordered when he made them guardians of men and gave them the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power of opening and closing, of binding and loosing.

He did this, that by self-accusation we might merit his grace and indulgence. St. Augustine says : "A humble confession of bad deeds is better than a proud glorying in good ones." By this means we are deterred from sinning. As the thorny hedge surrounding a garden prevents one from entering, so Christ wished to separate our life from sin by the thorny hedge of Confession. "I will hedge up thy way with thorns" (Osee. 2.) It is of no use to tell your confessor that you are a sinner, or to tell him only a few sins—you must confess all in specie and with their circumstances ; that is the bridle, these the thorns.

VI. Three days must be given to seeking, for after three days Christ was found. First day of Contrition ; second of Confession ; third of Satisfaction. As Christ was found before the close of the third day according to the more probable opinion of Euthymius and Cajetan, so by Penance Christ is found, although the third part is not yet completed but begun only by the promise of satisfaction. Christ wished that man should add this third day to the labor of penance ; first, that he might fully taste of the bitterness of sin, by which we lose our highest good. "See that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left thy God" (Jerem. 2). If every offense with its punishment were to be remitted at the first groan, we would not know how much gall and poison were hidden under the honeyed surface of sin. Therefore

we are subjected to various miseries and afflictions so that we may know. from the little remains of pardoned sin, what a severe punishment awaits those who have not been forgiven. Secondly, that by this means we may radically destroy sin, using the necessary antidotes:—fasting against gluttony, alms-giving against avarice, etc. Confession alone does not destroy these roots nor bad habits.

VII. After Christ has been found he must be carefully guarded lest he be lost again. Thus when the Blessed Virgin found her Son she brought him home and never lost him after. In like manner did the Spouse in the Canticles: "I have found him whom my soul loveth, I held him and will not let him go till I bring him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her who bore me." We must establish Christ in our souls—fleeing the occasions of sin, strengthening the mind with serious resolutions and pious thoughts and meditations on the love of God and our last end. Let us carefully examine our consciences daily, and if it be necessary to mingle with the world, let us never go without Christ. What profit will it be, after having with so much labor sought and found Christ, to lose him?

What profit, if you be unable to find him, if he be finally lost? The blessed cannot lose Christ; the damned cannot find him; but we are able to lose, and when lost to find, him. What profit in this life if, preoccupied with the thought of death, we cannot find time for penance? What profit if, having fallen into the abyss of sin, we neglect to seek him, nay more, if we despise him, as the wise man says: "The wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins contemneth (Prov. 18). There is an infinite space between Christ and hell—thence no one can return to him, no one seek him, no one find him. Therefore, if at any time we have gone to the tree of death, and there have lost Christ, let us go now to the tree of life—to the tree of penance and there find him; but in order to hold him we must taste of the fruit of the tree of life—penance. As the tree of life cannot always prolong life unless tasted often, so neither the sacrament of Penance only once received if you should fall again. Frequent confession, then, is the sure means of keeping Christ with us and of receiving the necessary graces for the salvation our souls.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF MARRIED PEOPLE.

I. Let the husband be the head of the wife, and the wife obey the husband. II. Let the husband honor the wife, and the wife the husband. III. Love between husband and wife. IV. Mutual help. V. Bear with each other's faults.

"Woman, what is it to me and to thee? (John 2 : 4).

THESE words of the text our Divine Lord addressed to his mother, that they might serve as a wedding-gift to the newly-married couple. What better manner of speech can a husband use towards his wife than: "Woman, what is it to me and to thee?" in this sense: What must I do and what must you do? If married people knew this and carefully pondered it, what a happy life they would lead! In the kingdom of Mogor, on the wedding day, the prospective bride and groom repair to the cemetery and there seriously reflect how they will spend their new life. The cemetery indeed is the best school of discipline; there is the potter's house (God's), where the Word of God is heard and where each one learns what he has to do (Jer. 18). But we shall conduct married people rather to the garden of paradise.

I. St. Paul, 1 Cor. 11 : 3, says: "The man is the head of the woman," that is, he must rule and govern gently as the head rules its members. It directs them by its eyes, it moves and keeps them in place. Woman was made from a rib of man, not from the breast, lest she should precede him; not from his back, lest as a servant she should follow him; but from his side so that as one of his members she should obey him as the head. Hence, Adam calls her: "Bone of his bones." This power of head was given to man by God when he created him to his own image and likeness, that he should rule the earth and woman also. Therefore, in order to perform this office, he gave him greater knowledge,

strength and power than to woman, to teach her, to rule and keep her in place, and thus he commanded Adam alone not to eat of the forbidden fruit. Adam soon exercised this power in communicating the same command to the woman lest she also should transgress; also by giving the name to woman as to all other living beings to show that it belonged to the ruler to know the names of all whom he had subject to him and to assign to each one his office. You see, therefore, by many arguments that man from the beginning was made the ruler and governor of woman; but, as was said, a gentle one, not a tyrannical one, not against the precepts of God and his Church. Nay more, this power of man over woman is so natural that the contrary is plainly monstrous; if for instance the woman were to rule the man she would be like those monstrosities of men who have their head below their shoulders, in their breasts; the woman was made from a rib of man, which should be below his head and shoulders, and not above them. From this it follows that it is a great disgrace for a man to allow himself to be deprived of his authority by his wife, no less than for one to allow himself to be stripped of his sword and wounded by it. To man the sword was given, and not to woman. This is no reason, however, for man to reject the advice of his wife; it is often very profitable to follow it. If Henry II., King of France, on the occasion of his sister Marguerite's wedding, had taken the Queen's advice to desist and be satisfied with his victories of the preceding day in the tournament, he would not have received a mortal wound, nor would he so truly have foretold his death when sending back word to her he said: "Just for this once and no more." Likewise the wife should be subject to the husband. "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power and he shall have dominion over thee" (Gen. 3:16). "In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands" (1 Peter 3:1). "But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to use authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Tim. 2:12). "A woman if she have superiority is contrary to her husband" (Ecclesiasticus 25:30). A woman shows this subjection to her husband by obeying him in all things not contrary to the law of God.

II. The husband should honor his wife. "Giving honor to the female as the weaker vessel and as to co-heirs of the grace of life" (1 Peter 3:7). Although the man may be more distinguished and renowned as regards talent, strength

and power than the woman, though more honored in his creation with many prerogatives, as to some, however, woman surpasses him. He was created outside paradise, she inside it; she had God for a bridegroom, who in a separate place from Adam, after he had taken the rib from him, "built the rib into a woman," that is, he constructed it with peculiar artifice and made it more beautiful and afterwards conducted her to Adam as his image, not as a creature of Adam, but as designed for him. By these ceremonies, he wished to show us that woman is not to be despised nor treated contemptuously by man. Finally, with great fitness, he created her from the side of Adam so that she should be his companion, as Adam himself declared: "The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree and I did eat" (Gen. 3:13). God did not wish to make her from the head of Adam, lest she should despise him, nor from his feet, lest she should be spurned by him; but from his side, so as to be his companion. God replaced Adam's flesh after the bone was taken, so that man should clothe himself with fitting meekness and moderation towards the woman and not with hardness of heart. "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter towards them" (Coloss. 3:19). The best reason, however, is that of St. Peter about weaker vessels; for although a glass vase is far less valuable than one of gold, nevertheless it must be more carefully handled and guarded than the latter, because it is more fragile. No less do husbands err who on the slightest provocation, with harsh and bitter words, scold their wives, while they gain no glory by railing at the weaker vessel, but rather do an injury to God because the wife belongs more to God than to man, who has the use only, not the dominion. Likewise the wife should honor the husband as her head and endowed with greater prerogatives by Almighty God. For this reason she was made, not from the right side of Adam, but from the left, the less honored; for the same reason Eve was conducted to Adam, not Adam to Eve. Hence it is a reasonable custom for woman to walk on the left; also for noble women to call their husbands lords; as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. They should not complain to others about their husbands, nor expose their faults, nor exaggerate them. In this matter St. Monica, according to St. Augustine, was an excellent model. Much less should a woman dare to raise her hand against her husband; this would be the same as for a pupil to strike his

teacher, a soldier his captain. "A woman shall not be clothed with man's apparel, neither shall a man use woman's apparel, for he that doeth these things is abominable before God" (Deut. 22 : 5). Is it not to put on man's apparel or to act the part of a man for a woman to strike him? This is an abomination in the sight of God, and is as dishonorable for the man as for the woman, no less than if a cat attacked a hunting dog.

III. A husband should love his wife as part of himself, as his own flesh, even more than his own parents. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it as also Christ doth the Church" (Ephes. 5 : 28, 29). As a reminder of this, Eve was made from the left side of Adam, on which side the heart is, so that man should bestow his love on his wife. This love should be genuine and sincere, not founded on the wife's beauty, riches, nobility, etc., for such love is built on sand and is soon swept away. It should be well-ordered—neither too much, nor too little. It will be too much when it is elevated above and against God, as in Adam, who, because of the woman, did eat; it will be too little when it turns to hatred and is expended on others. It should be strong and brave so that man should be ever ready to expose himself to any danger for the protection of his wife no less than for himself, as Jacob did for his wives when he was going to meet Esau, whom he feared; for he went a little ahead of them to defend them, as we read in Genesis 33. Likewise, after God, the wife should love only her husband, and unflinchingly stand beside him and study to preserve his safety, honor and his very life as the ribs guard and protect the heart. Let her be like Michol, the wife of David, who, knowing that her husband was to be put to death by her father, persuaded him to flee, and let him down at the window, then placed a wooden image in the bed (1 Kings 19).

Let her imitate those noble matrons who, while the Guelph Ruler of Bavaria was besieged by Conrad III., besought the Emperor to allow them to leave the city unharmed, promising that they would bear nothing away with them but what they could carry on their shoulders. Imagine his surprise when he saw each one of them, especially the Duchess, bearing her husband on her shoulders. He was so touched at the sight that all anger vanished, and he concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with his bitterest enemy.

IV. The husband should provide for his wife and offspring, by his labor and industry, as St. Paul says: "Every one cherishes and nourishes his own flesh" (Ephes. 5). As the head transmits food to all the members, so should the husband to his wife and children. Woman was made from one rib only; rib signifies fortitude and labor, and as all the ribs of man surpass one rib, so should the labor of the husband exceed that of the wife. For this reason Adam was placed in the garden of paradise to guard and care for it—not so of the woman. Again, woman was made from the weaker side so that man should understand that it belongs to him to provide for her.

What a great crime is it then for the husband to throw, not only the greater part of the burden, but even the whole, burden on the wife. How disgraceful it would be for a man on horseback to be led by a woman! In the flight into Egypt, Joseph is not pictured as seated on the ass, while Mary walked alongside. But rather the contrary. Why should a man marry a woman, if he is unable to support her? Is he not like the man who started to build a house and was unable to complete it? "This man began to build and could not finish" (Luke 14).

Likewise the wife should be a help to the husband in the support of the family. "Let us make him a help like unto himself" (Gen. 2). The same help that a staff gives to a tired man under a heavy burden, the same should a wife give her husband. Eve was made from Adam asleep, not awake, to show that man has need of rest from his toil; and the wife in the meantime should watch over him; and on her devolves the care of the family while he is sick or absent, or even while he is lazy and negligent. Hence woman took her name from man—Isch Ischa-man—masculine woman. It is a great error for those who say: It is enough for me to bear children and then rest; let the men work. A household with such a spirit reigning will soon come to naught. Such women are like the asses mentioned in Job 1: "And the oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans rushed in and took all away." There is still greater misery in store when the wife becomes worldly and squanders the hard earnings of her husband. Of him it may be said with Aggaeus 1: "He that hath earned wages, put them into a bag with holes." The spendthrift wife is such a bag whose only desire is the latest fashions, cost what they

will; who would starve rather than be without the newest bonnet.

V. The husband should bear with the defects and infirmities of his wife. Let him remember that she was made from his bone, and for this bone he was given flesh, so that he might communicate his strength to her weakness and bear her infirmities. Let him remember that with reason Eve was conducted first to Adam as his betrothed before he married her, as the spouse appears before her beloved that he may deliberate whether he shall take her or not. Therefore, Adam was to blame when he tried to shift the responsibility of his sin by saying: "The woman whom you gave me for a companion, gave me of the tree and I did eat." Did not the Lord lead her to him, did he not see her before he took her, and did he not then exclaim: "This now is bone of my bones?" Does not each man freely and of his own accord enter the marriage state? Let him then carry the cross which he has chosen. Let him overlook the trifling defects of the wife and strive by gentle reasoning to correct the graver ones. Let him answer a quarrelsome wife as Job did his scolding one: "You talk like a foolish woman."

Likewise the wife should bear with the husband as she is subject to him, she should study his wishes as an inferior studies those of his superior. The rib bends itself around the heart; so should the wife bend her will to that of her husband. The Spouse in the Canticles 8 says: "Put me as a seal upon thy heart." The seal does not accommodate itself so much to the wax as the wax to the seal, whose image it receives because it is soft and impressionable; in like manner the wife should be subject to the husband, pliable as wax and submissive to his will. This she will do by bearing in silence and patience with his defects and weaknesses. Let her learn a lesson from the lamb, true type of meekness, and be comforted by the words of Isaias: "In silence and in hope will be your strength." St. Chrysostom says: "The wife should be the port in the storm, but a tranquil port lest there the husband be shipwrecked." Since each has defects, let each bear with the other and, by mutual aid, strive to live happily lest they both come to ruin. Since man and wife are bound irrevocably, the more reason exists for each to study the disposition of the other. By each one giving way to the other, and not being tenacious of his or her will, there can be no doubt but that harmony will prevail.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

WHY GOD REQUIRES SATISFACTION.

I. Lest men should sin too freely. II. That by it they may destroy the roots of sin. III. More is required to repair than to make. IV. Justice demands it. V. Punishment should be commensurate with sin. VI. Involuntary punishment should be suffered for voluntary faults. VII. We must be conformed to Christ.

"But go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded" (Matt. 8 : 4).

We read in Judges 20 that, notwithstanding the great and repeated slaughters by the tribe of Benjamin, the Israelites came out victorious. How? They first consulted the Lord whether they should go to battle, and he consented, saying to them: "Let Juda be your leader." And forthwith they went to battle, and that day the children of Benjamin slew the children of Israel to the number of two and twenty thousand. Again Israel consulted the Lord—"yet so that they first went up and wept before the Lord until night." And he answered them: "Go up against them and join battle." Again they were defeated and lost eighteen thousand. "Wherefore all the children of Israel came to the house of God and sat and wept before the Lord: and they fasted that day till evening and offered to him holocausts and victims and peace offerings. And they heard: "Go up, for to-morrow I will deliver them into your hands." And the children of Israel set ambushes round about the city of Gaba, and they drew up their army against Benjamin the third time as they had done the first and second. And they were victorious. What lesson may we draw from this? Juda, that is confession, is not sufficient. Confession with tears does not suffice, because satisfaction is wanting, and without

which God is not appeased. God commanded you to confess your sins, but you do not immediately expiate them; he commands you to weep for them by contrition, and yet you are not victorious; it is only after you have offered holocausts and peace-offerings by prayer and fasting and almsgiving that your efforts will be successfully crowned. This is the lesson of to-day's gospel. The leper is sent to the priest to offer the gift which Moses commanded. Although you are clean, go, for there is yet one thing necessary—after your sin has been for given and your conscience purified, go, offer the gift of satisfaction. But, if by confession and contrition the conscience is purified, what need is there of satisfaction?

I. Satisfaction is necessary, lest men should more freely sin if there were none enjoined. As those who can heal their wounds by certain drugs or hidden charms rashly fight with every one, and should they forget them are easily vanquished, the same thing would happen if the sinner did not bring with him the special remedy for the wounds of sin, that is, a sense of grief. Who should then be afraid of the dangers of sin, and how many consequently would perish if the remedy without any cost were so easily at hand. The Israelites placed a like foolish confidence in the Ark of the Covenant, as if its presence alone, without any exertion on their part, could destroy their enemies. When they were conquered by the Philistines, they returned to the camp, and the ancients of Israel said: "Why hath the Lord defeated us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch into us the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord from Silo, and let it come into the midst of us, that it may save us from the hands of our enemies. And when the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was come into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout and the earth rang again." While they were shouting in the presence of the ark, instead of buckling on their armor and preparing for the conflict, the Philistines rushed upon them and literally cut them to pieces and captured the ark. The Philistines, on the other hand, when they heard the shout, exclaimed with fear and trembling: "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hands of these high gods?" And in the meantime they prepared themselves for battle, urging each other: "Take courage and behave like men and fight;" and in this spirit they fought and were victorious. In like manner, if no satisfaction for

sins were required, many Christians would say: What use to avoid the graver sins? Call the confessor and I will tell him all at once. But because the guilt of the temporal punishment remains, and must be expiated either in this world or in the next, the way is closed to him by his presumption. When Sennacharib, the king of the Assyrians, confided and gloried too much in his strength, the Lord said to him: "When thou wast mad against me, thy pride came up to my ears, therefore I will put a ring in thy nose" (Isaias 37 : 29). An iron ring is fixed in the nose of a wild ox, and the heavy trunk of a tree is tied to him, which he must drag after him, and by this means he is soon tamed. The Lord very wisely did this same when he fixed in the wicked sinner the ring of penance and tied to him the trunk of satisfaction, to be dragged along after sin had been forgiven.

II. Satisfaction is necessary that by its works, as by antidotes, the root of sin may be destroyed. Confession indeed destroys sin but it does not uproot the bad habit contracted in the continuance of sinning. Wherefore, as after the disease, the relics and corrupt dispositions remain in the members, so in the sinner the habits formed by many acts remain, and unless they are destroyed by antidotes, easily draw you to your former sins. St. Gregory says: "The heavenly Doctor for each and every vice gives an antidote—for voluptuousness, continency—pride, humility—anger, mildness—avariciousness, liberality." Confessors are accustomed to do likewise in imposing penance. The Lord adverted to this when, after having washed the feet of his disciples, he dried them with a towel. A towel is made of three kinds of thread—prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Unless the feet are carefully dried after washing, they are easily soiled again, for the water adhering to the flesh, being mixed with dust, forms mud; for the same reason, if the root of sin adheres to the affection of the sinner, when you remove the dust, the former objects of sin, instantly you gather mud. With this fruit God seems to have washed David's feet when, having forgiven him the sin of adultery, he delivered the child born of it to death. Why was the son given to death, unless because he too tenderly loved him and this love might urge him on to other crimes. Therefore, do not wonder if fasting be enjoined for drunkenness, charity for avarice, mortification for carnal pleasures, for these seem to be the suitable remedies for the disease.

III. Because more is required to restore fallen man than to create him. God without any labor created man perfect; but how much did he suffer to redeem him? In a short while, seven years, as we read in (3 Kings 6), the temple of Solomon was first built without strife; but, after it was destroyed by the weighty sins of the Jews, it required forty years to rebuild it and that with armed force, as we read in (2 Esdras 4), that every one with one hand did the work and with the other held a sword. Such is the spiritual edifice, which is built in the salvation of souls. In baptism, regenerated without labor, we become, through the grace of God, his city and house. If, however, afterwards, by the advice of the devil, or by returning to our former sins, we fall again, and the victorious enemy by the fire of vice destroys the walls of virtue, it is necessary to restore the building of good works by a more earnest application of the sorrow of vigils and of a stricter life. It is more difficult to rid ourselves of known vices than unknown ones, and it is less labor to avoid the unknown pleasures of the flesh than to reject the known. A horse that you have never driven to a certain stable will easily pass it by; but if you once drive him to it, he will always want to go to it, when you go that way, unless you use the whip. He does not need the whip of penance who has not entered the stable of the devil; but he is greatly in need of it who has entered only once; how will you turn away your flesh, untrue horse, unless you use the whip of affliction?

"I will go after my lovers who give me my bread, my water, my wool, my flax, my oil and my drink" (Osee 2 : 5). But listen to God's answer in the next verse: "Wherefore, behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and will stop it up with a wall and she shall not find her paths."

IV. That judicial process should be observed. For when the sacrament of penance in a tribunal of conscience is administered, no justice admits that he who trampled on the received grace of Christ should be restored by that sentence of the judge without any punishment, for certainly he has the annexed obligation of satisfaction lest the force of justice be brought to bear. "For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12 : 6). Hence the beautiful distinction as to the manner of treating a son who remains faithful and the one who runs away. The father chastises the former, that is, he repre-

hends by word, for that is properly to chastise according to Apoc. 3:19: "Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise," from mere anxiety for the good of the son. The latter is subjected to more severe punishment if he returns to his father, for if he is scolded who remains, most justly should he be scourged who deserts him. Wherefore David, although appeased, had ordered Absalom to be recalled to Jerusalem, however he would not allow him to appear in his presence for two years. This Absalom looked on as the greatest punishment, so much so that he preferred to be put to death rather than be any longer deprived of the sight of his father. Since it is very ungrateful for a son to leave the best of fathers and go over to the enemy, the indignation of that father is justifiable when he chastises that son on his return.

V. Because since there are two things in sin, a turning away from God as our last end and a turning to the creature who is wickedly placed before God; therefore, besides the punishment inflicted for turning away from the Creator, the punishment of the senses was decreed against the sinner turning to the creature. Listen to Jeremiah speaking in the person of God: "For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. . . . Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee, and thy apostacy shall rebuke thee" (2:13, 19); that is the punishment of the senses and the punishment of the damned. See how a twofold punishment is fitted to a twofold crime. But since, according to St. Augustine, to sin is having spurned the unchangeable good to adhere to the changeable, how are there two evils, a turning from God and a turning to the creature, and not rather one only? If a servant flees from his lawful master, he seems to commit only one crime. Certainly so. But if he flees from the best and kindest of masters to the most vile and most cruel? Does he not double the fault by leaving his lawful master, acting against justice and right, and going to a most contemptible tyrant? The Lord says: "They have left me their highest good and have gone to idols;" and since they are nothing they cannot aid them, they only can drink the turbid and fetid water of vice.

The Lord said to Adam: "Because thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labor and toil shalt thou eat

thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee" (Gen. 3:17). If God forgave the sin of Adam, why not also the punishment? Why did he not leave him in Paradise, unless that it were just that he should taste the fruit of the tree which he had preferred to God?

Thus, when one repents, he eats the bitter fruits of sin—satisfaction, which he himself had chosen. The same thing is seen in David, whose child, born in adultery, the Lord kills as a punishment; so that in the death of the child David should taste the fruit of his licentiousness, prone on the earth weeping and fasting. Nathan did not say to penitent David: God has remitted thy sin—but he has transferred thy sin from thy eternal death to the temporal death of thy son; he has changed for thee scorpions into stripes, the serpent's poison into wormwood, that at least you should taste the fruit of your sin.

VI. That voluntary sin should be atoned for by involuntary punishment, as Gerson says. Although the intellect of man inclines to the honest good and orders it to be chosen, having put aside the pleasing as noxious; the sinful will, however, as by mere rashness and lust having left the better, that is, the honest, selects the less good, the pleasing. Wherefore, that this rashness of a depraved will should be deservedly punished it is proper that it be forced to undergo something which it naturally flees from. Balaam's ass was a type of this, for when she saw the angel with a drawn sword on the road, she turned aside and went through the field; but Balaam beat her till she returned to the road, and there she found the angel again in a narrow place between two walls and she was unable to turn aside. The same with sensuality leading a man to sin against God. When he adverts to the threats of God warning him not to proceed, because its way is perverse and leading from God, what does it do? It leads him through the field of delightful good so that, in some way having forgotten the injunction of God, he rushes freely into sin. If he returns through penance to the road of virtue, he will find him from whom he fled—the sword of satisfaction, and he will go where he does not wish to, who went where he should not.

VII. That we may be likened to Christ, who satisfied for us, and so apply his satisfaction to ourselves. If one wishes to draw to himself the juice of the merits of Christ he should be likened to him in his passion. Christ, without a doubt,

satisfied for us, but only as to sufficiency, not efficacy, for to this second our cooperation is required. If you wish to drink you must first let down the bucket to draw the water, then pour it into your pitcher, place that on your shoulder and carry it home.

Christ has prepared for us a well of saving water to eternal life—a well of his merits, not only sufficient for us, but overflowing. But, because you see the well before you, do you immediately drink? Lower first the bucket of your heart and draw the water of contrition; then by confession pour forth your heart as water; finally place it on your shoulder and by satisfaction carry your sin.

Christ surely carried your iniquities when he carried the cross; but do you not read that Simon the Cyrene was forced to carry the cross after Jesus? as though he lifted the lighter part while Christ had the heavier.

Unless you likewise carry it and lift at least the lighter part you cannot apply his passion to yourself. Samuel, by prophetic spirit knowing that Saul was coming to be anointed king, ordered a shoulder of mutton to be kept from his dinner, saying: "Behold, what remains I place before you, eat." The shoulder is the member of labor; Christ, after the supper of his passion, places it before you to carry the burden of penance. Christ by the cross redeemed all; but there remained for him, who would be saved and reign with him, to be crucified. "If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him," says St. Paul. Therefore, if one wishes to obtain a complete victory over sin, his greatest enemy, he must not be content with mere confession, and the shedding of tears of contrition; he must besides add fasting and other works of satisfaction; by these sacrifices he pleases God so that, not only the sin itself is remitted, but also the punishment due to it.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

THE MISERIES OF HUMAN LIFE.

I. Miseries of the body:—Nakedness, weakness, inconstancy, a perpetual wave. II. Miseries of the soul:—Perplexity and instability, continual anxiety, ignorance and inconstancy, rebellious passions, burden of sin. III. External miseries:—Calamities, snares of the devil, fear of death, fear of judgment of God.

"Lord, save us, we perish" (Matt. 8:25).

We see the state of human life depicted as by an artist's brush in to-day's gospel when we see Christ with his disciples sailing on the sea of Tiberias. What is a boat, but the body of man? who sails in it, but his soul? what is the sea, but the world? what is the port whence we start, but the maternal womb? what is the port whither we are tending, but the grave?

Wherefore St. Gregory says truly: "Our life is like a sailor." The damned in hell bear testimony to this as we read in the Book of Wisdom (5:10): "As a ship that passeth through the waves, etc., so we also being born forthwith ceased to be." This is confirmed in the very birth of man, in which the umbilical cord, which binds him to the mother as a ship to the shore, is cut. When the ropes are cut the ship sails out into the deep; so the child goes forth into the world.

I. Miseries of the body. When a ship is launched she is without covering, unarmed and empty, without sails, motive power, provisions, etc., so man comes into the world naked and helpless, weak and ignorant; neither can he speak nor help himself, nor ask help from anyone; he can only cry out as though declaring his miseries. Other living beings are born with their coverings, some with their scales, some with feathers, some with hair, some with wool, as trees are covered

with bark. Soon after birth they know how to prepare food, they swim, fly, crawl, run, and without any guide they find the mother's breast; man alone comes into the world naked, exposed to all the storms of heaven; he cannot eat unless he is taught; he does not know how to walk, he must be carried; he does not know his parents; he does not reach the age of reason till about seven years; he does not laugh till forty days after birth; he cannot defend himself till he is in robust health. 2. As a ship is a fragile pile of wood, of beams or joists put together with spikes, a pile that is easily damaged and rent asunder; so the body of man is made of bones and nerves, as Job says, weak and infirm. A pestilential odor, an infectious air, a burning sun, a fierce winter easily prostrates it and often causes death. One dies from a drink of cold water, another from too much wine, another from grief, another from imaginary fear, another from the bite of a serpent, etc. I shall say nothing of everyday infirmities, which must be expelled by medecines from the system else death will ensue. 3. As a ship is always restless on the waves, never remaining in a fixed place, so the body of man is subject to change; in infancy it is four-legged, in old age, three-legged, in middle-life, two-legged; flourishing and beautiful in youth, fading in manhood, gray-haired and homely in old age. "Man born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow and never continueth in the same state" (Job 14 : 1, 2). Childhood is weak in both body and mind; youth is weak in mind, strong in body; old age is weak in both body and mind; as a ship is narrow in the bow, wide in the center and narrow again in the stern. Childhood is cunning and sweet, youth and manhood serious, old age morose. 4. As a ship in its course is always tending with utmost speed to its destined port, although the sailors may eat, play or sleep; so our body is continually tending to death; and as the ship is propelled by each stroke of the engine, so our body by each beating of the heart. Hence, St. Gregory says: "He who sails, stands, sits, lies down, walks, because the ship is moving; so with us, whether asleep or awake, silent or talking, every moment of time, we are moving to our end." In the meantime, deceived by self-love, we do not know that we are rushing to death more swiftly than the east wind; we think that others will die soon, that we shall live a long time,

as though our life were at our disposal. St. Jerome says: "Daily we die and daily we are changed, and yet, against faith and experience itself, we believe that we are eternal. There is no one so broken down in old age, who does not believe that he has another year to live.

II. If we consider the mind of man, we shall see that it resembles the captain of a ship who rules all on board. He has his own miseries. He has narrow quarters, must be content in a small cabin, even though he were a prince. So the rational mind, born for the highest good, dwells within the narrow confines of the human body and is, therefore, always restless, seeks higher things, envies those who are better, and finally is not satisfied with any created object. No one desires to exchange his state with another; he thinks that he is happier. Farmers say merchants are happy, and merchants say farmers are happy. The private citizen envies the honors of a judge; the judge envies the rest and quiet of the citizen. Clerics hold that the state of lay people is more secure and tranquil, and lay people hold the opposite. There is no one content with his lot. How many emperors and kings have abdicated the throne! As the sick are always restless in bed, now turning this way, now that, seeking rest but never finding it, because they do not know that the cause of their unrest is an internal malady, so with mortals. A man says: "And whereas, I have all these things, I think I have nothing, so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting before the king's gate" (Esther 5:13). Man was born for eternity and therefore cannot be satisfied with the temporal.

2. The captain is always anxious about his ship, how he shall govern it, how provide for the passengers, how defend it against hostile ships, how bring it with its cargo safely into port. So the minds of mortals are continually agitated by fear, sorrow and grief even without cause, so they can say with (Job 7:20): "Why am I become burdensome to myself?" How many hardships do mortals suffer in earning a living! Do they not like the spider for years meditate, while they disembowel themselves with various thoughts how they shall weave the net to capture the prey although it is vile and uncertain?

3. He is ignorant of many things and for this reason he is upset in his calculations. Often he does not know whither he is going, whether he is to meet friends, or enemies. So also there is little light in the human intellect; man knows

a few things and is ignorant of a great many; and what he knows, he soon forgets; the unknown he learns with difficulty; he desires to know more and this desire becomes a torture; for the more he knows the more he sees he does not know. What shall I say about his inconstancy; he changes every hour, he quickly departs from the opinion he had formed; when often he is most stupid, he believes himself most wise; now sad, now joyful, now calm, now excited, now timid, now brave, now he laughs, now he weeps. In a word, as the chameleon changes his color according to the variety of objects, so does man according to the various ideas which present themselves as (Job 14), says: "He never remains in the same state."

4. In olden times slaves were used to ply the oars on the ships, and at times they would mutiny against the captain, overpower him and take command of the vessel. So the human reason has five senses, then rebellious passions bound to the body;—love prefers itself to some and desperately adores others; hate scorns salutary things and sometimes itself and God; concupiscence revels in harmful, foolish and useless things; hope promises itself, that which will never come; fear is dissolved in idleness and dreams of dangers where they are not; rashness rushes into all dangers of damnation; anger is insane etc., etc.

5. The weight of overloaded merchandise bears heavily on the ship, so that the captain, to save himself and crew, is often obliged to throw it overboard. So the mind of man is oppressed by the weight of sin, and the heavier it becomes the longer he lives. If he does not wish to imperil his salvation, he should get rid of it by penance, and resolve to lead a new life. Often this load of sin becomes so heavy that some men cannot bear it, and therefore commit suicide and plunge themselves into the dreadful abyss; others are always in a drunken stupor, so that they cannot see the gravity of their sins; others, conscious of their crimes, are like fugitives running hither and thither, and even from themselves; others, overcome by grief, willingly forsake their crimes.

III. If we look outside the ship, we shall see dangers.

1. Storms by which the sea is lashed into fury and the ship is hurled on the rocks or driven to hostile shores, or tossed about far from land until provisions give out, and they must fight against hunger and thirst. In like manner external calamities ruffle the life of man: pestilence, wars,

hunger, slavery, earthquakes, fires, robberies, etc. But the very calm itself and prosperous winds very often bring danger to him:—plenty, power, health, etc. By these he is carried out into the deep and forgets his God, and at length is shipwrecked; by these adverse winds he is hurled into the slough of weakness and despair. These two states play with man as the waves with the mariner.

2. Enemies and pirates are met who must be fought, and, therefore, the ship must be well provided with arms and ammunition; so each one must meet many enemies, who are always dangerous. He meets the pirates, those devils who always infest the sea of life, most cunning, most powerful, and most cruel. Then men themselves who are wolves and cut-throats; then, not only the larger and more ferocious animals, lion, tiger, bear, etc., but the smaller ones, flies, gnats, frogs, etc.

3. The mariner meets rocks and other impediments to retard his course. So the life of man is set in the midst of nets, with which the world is so filled, as St. Anthony once saw it that, overwhelmed, he cried out: "O Lord, who can escape all these nets?" Such nets are: honor, money, pleasure, wine, woman and song, which withdraw some from progress in virtue and draw others to themselves and hold them fast, and at length shipwreck them. Hence it is that so many souls perish daily; there is no security anywhere; as a ship is perfectly safe only when she is drawn up on the beach, so man is safe only when he has departed this life.

4. The fear of shipwreck is always before the mariner's eyes; he is only a short distance from death. Certain philosophers doubted whether the mariner should be placed in the number of the living or the dead. Another called mariners twice dead. For the like reason, it cannot be but that death, than which nothing is more certain, is always before the eyes of man. Shipwreck is certain for him. Some suffer it in their mother's womb as in port; some in infancy when they are launched on the sea of life; some on the high seas in middle age; some in old age. And as mariners perish from various causes: rocks, enemies, storms, etc., so mortals from various causes cease to live; some by a violent death, some by a natural one. As the ship was bare and empty when it was launched, and again was empty when it reached port, so the same is said of man. "As he came forth naked from his mother's womb, so shall he return, and

shall take nothing away with him of his labor" (Eccles. 5 : 14). As a reference to this, of the twelve precious stones placed in the crown of the king of France, the most conspicuous is the onyx, resembling the color of the earth, that he may know he is to return to earth, whence he came, and that a king is nothing else while he reigns than elevated earth. That is the greatest misery of all when men live so securely as though they were never to die, and they never give death a thought.

5. Mariners are captives in the hand of God, so that at any moment he can destroy their ship and cast them into the deep, whence they can cry out with Job : "Remember, O Lord, my life is a wind." And although those who sail the seas seem to be exempt from the laws of men because they are out of their sight and power, as the fishes of the deep, yet they are not out of God's sight and power, who is most carefully watching them and all their actions. Jona strove to flee from the face of God and betook himself to a ship, which was soon tossed about by a severe storm, and by the design of God he was cast into the sea and swallowed by a whale. So we are all in the hand of God. Great is our misery if we know that our Master is always standing over us with the rod ; greater still if we do not know how easy it is for him to destroy us. Whither shall we flee from the face of him whom we always carry with us ?

Since these things are so, it is wonderful how man can be elated. How can one love the world and its miserable life so replete with bitterness ? How can we be without fear who navigate among so many dangers ? How many great reasons there are for us to cry out : "Lord save us, we perish !" How seriously we should labor to have Christ always in our boat and to be constituted in his grace.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

INDUCEMENTS TO LABOR WELL.

I. God animates us as often as he goes out. II. Our Christian profession. III. Good occasions. IV. Grace given for this. V. Reward promised. VI. Punishment for the idle.

"Go you also into my vineyard" (Matt. 20 : 4).

It is related that the King of Granata, on account of his love for a certain Ethiopian, was exiled to Alpuxara. At times he would stand on a high mountain and turn towards his native land, would fall on his knees and weep most bitterly over the loss of his kingdom. His mother would chide him, saying that it was very proper and just for him and his followers to weep like women since they did not fight like men. The state of Christians is not unlike that of the unfortunate king. Paradise was formerly ours ; there we had full power ; there we had unalloyed pleasures and delights ; we had no fear of misery and death. But on account of our love for the abandoned Ethiopian—a vile creature—we were expelled from our kingdom and home, and reduced to slavery. Therefore we should often turn to the East, where paradise was, fall on our knees and give vent to our sorrow in groans and tears. This we do to-day while in the Office of the Church we recall the fall of our first parents, and the time of their wandering ; and therefore the canticles of joy ; Te Deum, Gloria and Alleluia are silent ; in the Introit we sorrowfully intone : "The groans of death have surrounded me, the sorrows of hell have surrounded me." And while we are thus lamenting, our Mother the Church, urging us to fight for the recovery of our lost kingdom, proposes to our consideration the story of the laborers in the vineyard. In the Epistle she says : "Thus run, that you may understand ;" and in the

gospel: "Why stand you here the whole day idle?" why do you weep in vain? Go to work, take up your spades, take up your arms and use every endeavor to recover your lost country. Unless you do this, you will surely weep like women, because you have not fought like men. Therefore, by a careful study of good works and by spiritual warfare we can recover all that we lost—nay more, a celestial paradise instead of a terrestrial one.

I. To this God urges us by so many means and labors. The householder went out five times to seek and conduct laborers into his vineyard. God goes out when he does anything outside himself, when he invites us by various calls, by the Scriptures, sermons, miracles, etc. If these goings-out are not laborious to God, that one was very laborious, in which, by his very self and in his own person, he descended to earth and for thirty-three years did nothing else than seek laborers, never resting from his journeys and even forgetting to eat when he was hungry. "Jesus being weary with his journey sat thus on the well" (John 4:6). He asked a drink of water from the Samaritan, in the meantime forgetful of food and drink, because he was seeking laborers. If we would consider all the labors God underwent for our sakes, who would not be animated? who would not be urged to work well? and this alone he asks of us. If parents labor so strenuously for the proper bringing up of their children, leaving nothing undone to provide for them, depriving themselves of even the necessaries of life for their sakes; should not the children, seeing all this, cheerfully respond and strain every nerve to profit by such noble self-sacrifice? It often happens that the children of the poor advance more rapidly at school than the children of the rich, because they know how much it costs their parents to keep them there. It is God who with so much labor keeps us in the school of the Church; who has gathered together all that is necessary for our eternal crown by many journeys, by great fatigue, by hunger and thirst, by his most precious blood; who went out from heaven to visit us, who goes out often by various inspirations, especially in the Holy Eucharist. Should we not then cheerfully respond to such labor undergone by God for us? If the parents should find that all their labor was in vain, that their children turned out to be lazy, good-for-nothing beings, squandering all they had accumulated in the sweat of their brow; would they not have just cause for

grief? What are we doing, they would say, for whom are we working, for whom do we suffer hunger and thirst? Our children are idle, lazy, voluptuous, giving free rein to their passions—to the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life. Therefore, God in all truth could say of such children what we read in Eccles. 2 : 18, 21 : "I hated all my application wherewith I had earnestly labored under the sun. . . . When a man laboreth in wisdom and knowledge and carefulness, he leaveth what he hath gotten to an idle man; so this also is vanity and a great evil."

II. Our Christian profession. We are bound by a special obligation to work well for God and to serve him by good works on the strength of our calling, in which we should imitate Christ our master, "who went about doing good and healing all." This is indicated in the gospel while the laborers were gathered together and sent to the vineyard; for the householder did not select the men at court, the nobles nor the studious who might only walk around the vineyard and amuse themselves eating grapes, but laborers. Now there is no doubt but that we are invited to the vineyard, therefore we must be laborers in it. As Adam was placed in the garden of paradise, "that he might guard it and care for it," so we are placed in the Church. What would the lord of the vineyard say if he saw those whom he called lounging around, and not working? And we wish to be called laborers of God when we spend our lives with our own personal affairs and scarcely once in a day give a thought to our high and noble calling! Are we ignorant of what God did with the fig tree that bore leaves only and no fruit? Did he not say to it: "May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more forever." This tree is a type of the Christian man. It is more fruitful than other trees, bearing oftener than once a year; so the Christian above all others should be productive of good works; otherwise he will be more severely punished by God. After St. Bernard had become a monk, he was wont to ask himself: "Bernard, why have you come here?" Let us ask ourselves the same question: Why have you come into the vineyard of the Church? Why are you so taken up with secular pursuits as to be unmindful of your high calling? Why does the Church prescribe fasts, confession, attendance at mass, etc.? She wishes us to strive earnestly after Christian perfection. It will not suffice to

be Christian in name only—the fig tree bore leaves, and yet it was condemned. We must be Christians in deed and show by our earnest labors that we cheerfully respond to the divine call.

III. Occasions, opportunities, inducements to work well. In the vineyard of the Church we have the best opportunities for working well. Not so heretics, who are outside the vineyard. We are indeed the "tree which is planted near the running waters" (Ps. 1), because, placed near the fountains of grace, we can drink in the greatest moisture of merits. What are the sacraments, especially penance and eucharist, sermons, precepts of faith, examples of saints, holy books, masses, indulgences, ceremonies of the Church, sacred images—what are all these but fountains perpetually flowing by our doors, whence, if we will, we can drink to satiety of the waters of life and lay up for ourselves a treasury of merits. Heretics and Jews are not in this vineyard, nor have they such an abundance of graces. More truly can they say than we: "No one invited us." If they had the same opportunities we possess, if they had the same fountains and rivers, how earnestly they would labor in the Lord's vineyard! We have proof of this in what the Lord says in Matt. 11: "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee Bethsaida: for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, they had long ago done penance in sack-cloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." How do you think bad Christians will feel on the day of judgment when they will remember how many rivers of grace they allowed to flow by without deriving any benefit therefrom? Then they will bewail with intensest grief so many opportunities forever lost.

IV. Implements to labor with given us by God: grace, knowledge, faith and other virtues. Why is grace given us in baptism, strength in confirmation? Why is faith explained to us in sermons, if not to teach us to live by it? How absurd it would be for a laborer with a spade to go into a vineyard, and there walk around idly—the same for the Christian who carries with him grace and knowledge and faith and does not use them to his profit. "We do exhort you not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6). Kings were anointed on the shoulders that they might become strong and valorous. Christian kings are anointed in baptism and con-

firmation surely not to remain idle, but to battle bravely for an eternal crown. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me hath not been void; but I have labored more abundantly than all they" (2 Cor. 15). How many carry the sword of grace and never unsheath it! How many carry the key of knowledge and never use it to unlock the bountiful stores of Scripture! How many have the opportunity of becoming enlightened in sermons with regard to their duties and obligations and never seize it!

V. Reward promised. There is a vast difference between the laborers of the Lord and our laborers. We give the promised reward to the laborer, but we do not give him the fruit of his labor. If some one sows for you, you do not give him the harvest; if some one builds for you, you do not give him the house. But God does this. He not only nourishes us and rewards us while we labor in his vineyard, but he promises us and gives us the whole fruit of our labor in heaven, because he wants us not to labor for him but for ourselves. "Say to the just man that it is well, for he shall eat of the fruit of his doings. . . . And the Lord of hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the lees, he shall cast death headlong down for ever" (Isaias 3 : 25). Here the prophet seems to allude to the wine feast given after the vintage. As the laborers are invited to the feast, so will God invite his laborers to a feast in the mountain of heaven. But there is a great difference in these feasts; those of men, especially laborers, are not on marrow nor wine with lees, that is simple, pure delight; for with the delights of this world are mixed many cares, anxieties, vanities, etc. Although they appear pleasant they will not last. But the heavenly banquet will consist of the best and choicest goods—meats, refreshing to behold—all the saints, the angels—Christ himself—the splendor of heaven—a wonderful symphony most pleasing to the ear—the most delicious savors—the sweetest odors—the most charming society. A banquet without care and sadness—an everlasting banquet from which no one will ever be ordered to rise. Formerly it was customary among some to place a skull on the banquet table to remind the guests that it was not to last forever. In heaven there will be no such reminder; for the "Lord shall cast death headlong down forever." Rightly was the reward for the laborers in the vineyard called a denarius, a coin of

ten asses. For denarius is a perfect number representing the observance of the ten commandments ; it is round, signifying eternity ; silver, the excellence of glory ; daily, the shortness of labor, that is of a day ; for this laborious life is as a day compared with the heavenly one ; its dawn is childhood ; morning, youth ; midday, manhood, and evening, old age. On the coin is stamped the image of the ruler, that is, the beatific vision of God, and although it is the same in all as in the coin, it is participated in in a greater or lesser degree by the blessed as the sun is brighter to a clearer eye—in the vineyard some went before, some followed, in receiving their wages. The superscription is all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God. Who will not labor freely in the vineyard of the Lord ? If we labor for a coin for one day, what should we do for an eternal reward ?

VI. Punishment for the idle. The lord of the vineyard, Christ, will come and exact from us an account of our labor. Wo to you idle ones, when you shall be found void of good works ; what will you answer when you hear : "Why stand here the whole day idle ? Why have you passed your whole life without any fruit ? Where are your labors ?" It will not do for you to answer : Lord, we have not destroyed anything in your vineyard ; we have not done harm to any one ; we did not prevent any one from working. This will be of no avail, for he will not say : Why do you stand here, ye evil doers ? Why did you destroy my vineyard ? but—"Why stand ye here idle ?" For this alone you will be condemned, because you have done nothing good. We have a figure of this in Judges 12 : "And the Galaadites secured the fords of the Jordan by which Ephraim was to return. And when any one of the number of Ephraim came thither in flight and said : I beseech you let me pass, the Galaadites said to him : Art thou not an Ephraimite ? If he said : I am not, they ordered him to say Scibboleth, which is interpreted an ear of corn. But he answered Sibboleth, not being able to express an ear of corn by the same letter. They presently took him and killed him in the very passage of the Jordan." This is what will happen to us. We must all some time cross the Jordan—the river of judgment—doubtful and dangerous. The Galaadites guard it—the angels bearing the entire accumulation of testimony against us. Galaad means accumulation of testimony. Therefore, when an Ephraimite —a Christian soul—comes to that river of judgment, the

angels will ask, Is it a Christian soul? It will not suffice to say yes, for then the angels will ask it to pronounce the word Scibboleth—ears of corn of good works, and if unable to do so, wo to that soul, for it will be strangled and cast into everlasting fire.

Christ himself assures us that all these things will happen. "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just. And they shall cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matt. 13 : 49, 50).

Christ shall separate the good from the bad, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and shall say to the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels : for I was hungry and you gave me not to eat ; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink ; I was a stranger, and you took me not in ; naked, and you covered me not ; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me" (Matt. 25 : 41–43).

Let us then work faithfully in the Lord's vineyard, so that when evening comes we may hear that sweetest of invitations : "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you."

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

MANNER OF HEARING THE WORD OF GOD.

I. Preparatory prayer. II. Preparatory compunction. III. Strict attention. IV. Earnest memory. V. Careful consideration. VI. Thanks.

"And other some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred-fold" (Luke 8 : 8).

THERE is a great difference with regard to the seeds mentioned in to-day's gospel. Some fell by the wayside and were trodden down, some fell on rocks and perished, some fell among thorns and were choked. What is the meaning of these various conditions? They are not in the sower, who is one and the same, not in the seed, which was equally fruitful. The difference, therefore, is in the soil. From this we learn that the fruitfulness of the word of God depends on the condition of the sinner. No matter who the preacher may be so long as he is commissioned by God; no matter the kind of sermon as long as it is consistent with the word of God—there is little reference to the fruit. Everything depends on the hearer.

I. Before planting, the earth is prepared by plowing. Before hearing a sermon, the soul must be prepared by prayer that the heart may become docile, the mind collected, the ears opened. The preacher may fill the minds of his hearers with words, but he cannot open the ears of the heart, that the hearer may believe, receive and apply to himself what is said. Only God can do this. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, did hear; whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul" (Acts 16 : 14).

St. Chrysostom says: "Little or no fruit can be derived from sermons without the preparation of prayer." St. Paul,

always begins his epistles by prayer, that the light of prayer may guide and direct his speech. As the birds of the air, the demons are always laying snares for the word of God, it should be guarded and preserved by prayer, lest we be prevented from hearing it, or deprived of its teaching. As crows are driven from the cornfield by the image of a specter, let us at the beginning of a sermon make on our foreheads the sign of the cross to drive away the crows of hell. All good Christians bless themselves and pray before sitting down to meals. Let us do likewise before sitting down to partake of the bread of life.

II. Before sowing, the field is cleared of thorns, briars, stubble and stones. So, when you wish to hear the word of God with profit, you must cleanse the soul by compunction and sorrow for sin. For although sinners can and should hear the word of God; they will hear it, however, with greater benefit, if their hearts are prepared by contrition. "Break up anew your fallow ground and sow not upon thorns" (Jerem. 4). "Wherefore, casting away all uncleanness and abundance of naughtiness, with meekness receive the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1). St. Chrysostom says: "If one wishes to put some precious ointment in a vessel, he sees that it is first perfectly clean." In what esteem do we hold the word of God, when we allow it to enter an unclean heart? Before sitting down to table we wash our hands. Sermons are the spiritual food of the soul. The Israelites were ordered to wash their garments before they heard the promulgation of the law (Exod 19).

III. The seed is sown in the field and not on the highway; so the word of God should be received in the heart, with a watchful mind and a silent tongue. St. Chrysostom says: "If when the letters of a king are read, there is profound silence; all ears are open to hear their contents; and should any one make the slightest noise, he is in danger; much more profound should silence be, much more attentive the listeners when there is question of the word of God."

St. Augustine requires the same attention in hearing the word of God as in receiving communion lest the particles fall on the ground. He says: "He is no less guilty, who negligently hears the word of God, than he who, through carelessness, lets the sacred Host fall to the earth." Then he adds: "I would like to know if, from the moment one begins to

preach, your daughters would stand and receive the most precious jewels and gems we could desire. We, because we cannot and should not offer temporal gifts, are not readily listened to. He who freely hears the word of God is certain that he receives from heaven most precious gifts for the soul." Therefore, the heart should be opened and the word of God drunk in with the greatest delight as something most precious and necessary ; as the advice of a skilled and learned physician is listened to by his patient. With what attention and care and silence would that physician be heard who would declare with the utmost confidence that he had remedies, not only against all ills, even incurable ones, but also how to acquire wealth and successfully offset the machinations of our enemies. But the word of God will do all these things. Magdalene cast herself at her Master's feet, for she knew he was the heavenly physician of her soul. Many hear the word of God with little or no profit because they do not apply it to themselves as they are ignorant of their sickness. They apply what they hear rather to their neighbors. If so and so were here, how nicely the cap would fit him. One would imagine that the preacher knew exactly the mode of living of so and so, so accurately does he depict his actions. I give thee thanks, O Lord, that I am not like these poor sinners. Thus they reason with themselves, never for a moment imagining that they are in need of any spiritual prescription, and yet they may be suffering from a complication of diseases which requires the tenderest nursing of the Divine Physician himself. They see the mote in their brother's eye and do not see the beam in their own.

We must not attend to the art nor the eloquence of the preacher, but to the spirit and the matter itself. Let us pluck the apples and heed not the leaves. We must not make too much of the condiments of speech, which are sometimes used to the delight of the hearer and to help the memory. Otherwise he who prefers the sauce to solid food gives evidence of possessing a disordered stomach. At table we neither stand nor walk, but sit, that we may eat with more contentment and at our ease. We are careful about the crumbs that fall from the table, and would consider it a sin to leave them to be trampled on. Is not the bread of the soul of more value than the bread of the body ?

IV. The harrow is used to cover the seed and bury it, as it were, in the earth, lest the birds should steal it. So the

word of God should be stowed away in the memory, lest it should soon be forgotten and become a prey to hellish birds. "When the magpie," says Pliny, "sees that her nest is sought by man, she transfers her eggs to another, lest she lose her young." The word of God is a little nest of eggs which the devil assails ; it should be carefully guarded and planted deep in the mind, lest through forgetfulness it be taken from us and that the eggs of good resolutions may never be rejected. David was wont to act this way when he says : "Thy words have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against thee" (Ps. 118). The bottle in which distilled water is kept is tightly corked, so that the strength of the water should not evaporate. The same should be done with the word of God. But some one will object that there are too many things in a sermon and that it is impossible to remember them all. But it is not necessary to retain all ; it suffices that each one select what applies to himself and his needs. As at a banquet there are many kinds of food, yet one is not obliged to partake of them all, he may take what pleases him and leave the rest. When a preacher has a variety of hearers, he places before them a variety of doctrines, not that each one should observe them all, but that he should take to himself the points which will benefit him. The same may be said of corporal food. After it has been taken the stomach closes itself for digestion, which is a sign of good health ; on the contrary, it is a sign of poor health to reject the food from the stomach. St. Gregory says : "The food of the mind is the word of God, and as received food is rejected from the stomach, the received word of God is not retained in the mind. The one who does not retain nourishment is certainly to be despaired of." Only those will derive profit who, with a good heart hearing the word of God, keep it.

V. The seed in the field is crushed and in a way dies : so the word of God must be handled with diligent consideration as though it were given up to execution. The Lord ordered the Jews to bind the words of his law to their hands, to meditate on them when at home, when on a journey, when they went to bed and when they arose ; that they should place them not only in their hearts, but before their eyes, and write them above their doors (Deut. 6 : 11). The Gentiles, in order to be more deeply impressed by their laws and to preserve them, formed them into songs and chanted them.

What then should Christians do? Incense does not emit an odor unless it is put in the fire; so no sentence of Scripture reveals its strength unless it is thoroughly cooked in the mind. The messengers of God, his words, should be admitted, not only in the door, but even to the innermost recesses of the heart; therefore, when you hear that one mortal sin merits hell-fire, you should examine whether perchance in you there is only one or more, whether there be some hidden ones you make no account of; how easily you fall and what would happen if you were to die in your sins. The same thing we can be taught from corporal food; before we take it with profit, we must first masticate it well, otherwise it will become injurious to us. This is well said in Proverbs: "A desirable treasure rests in the mouth of a wise man, but a foolish man swallows it."

The treasure is the word of God, the mouth in which it rests through consideration is the heart of the wise man. Such was the most wise Mother of Christ, as we read in Luke 2: "But Mary kept all these words, pondering them, in her heart." She made a careful review of them as diligent students are wont to do after having read some works. The foolish man, who does not use reflection, swallows sermons and derives no benefit from them.

VI. The seed committed to the earth is watered by rain and nourished by the heat of the sun. The action of grace, which we can merit through the goodness of God, should so envelope a sermon that an increase from the sown seed should be obtained. So after meals thanks are given to God, by which we express the hope that he will allow us to eat again on the following day. The same thing we do at the end of a sermon, by reciting some prayer, so that the word of God with his blessing may produce great fruit in us.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS, WHICH IS UNMINDFULNESS OF OUR LAST END.

I. Craftiness of the devil. II. Incredulity of men. III. Love of self. IV. Presumption. V. Fear of sadness. VI. Supine neglect of salvation.

"Lord, that I may see" (Luke 18 : 41).

THE Egyptian darkness was so dense that no one could see his neighbor ; it lasted for three days and nights and indicated the blindness of mind of Pharao and the Egyptians, who, after so many plagues, would not believe in God nor provide against the calamity threatening them. In to-day's gospel we read of the blind man near Jericho, a type of all blind mortals seated by the wayside of salvation near a foolish world. For Jericho, according to St. Gregory, signifies the moon and represents foolishness.

Unmindfulness of our last end is the greatest blindness ; for though we know for a certainty that we shall die and then be judged, yet we make no preparation for these solemn events. The same way, when we know that hell is the place for sinners, we revel in all manners of vice, and sleep securely. What greater calamity could befall us ? If at any other time, now more especially, men are blind so that it may be said with the Wise Man : "The number of fools is infinite. They are a nation without counsel and without wisdom : O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end" (Deut. 32 : 28, 29). On next Wednesday the Church will sprinkle ashes on your heads to remind you of your nothingness, after the example of Christ, who, with clay touched the eyes of the blind man mentioned in another part of the gospel,

and restored him his sight. Let us weigh well the causes of this wonderful blindness.

I. The craftiness of the devil and unceasing study to prevent men from remembering their last end. For he well knows the great power of memory. It is related that Getulus, a shepherd, seeing a ferocious lion rushing at him and knowing the great strength in his eyes, threw his cloak over the lion's head and thus easily subdued him. The devil knows what strength is in the human eyes when they consider their last end, and therefore he labors strenuously to cover them, and once covered, he has no difficulty in subduing them and bringing them under his sway. Was not Sampson a lion who, while he could see, was not only invincible, but brought terror and destruction to the Philistines; but when they put out his eyes he became helpless, and they made all kinds of fun of him? He who is unmindful of his last end walks easily in the circle of his vices, which if he had his sight he would not do, to rejoice in evil things, to spurn salutary advice and to make light of small things. Then the devil persuades him not to listen to the Word of God in sermons; to read obscene books; to frequent places of sin; to give free rein to his passions; to revel in all kinds of Bacchanalian delights. King Avennir pursued the same policy to prevent his son Josophat from embracing the faith. He provided all kinds of pleasure for him and banished the least indication of gloom and sadness. And he would have succeeded, were it not for St. Barlaam, who, with a wiser cunning, instilled into the mind of the young man serious thoughts of his last end, and finally succeeded in making a great saint of him. So the devil acts with men, keeping the mind fixed on the present and filled with thoughts of pleasure, keeping a telescope before them in which pleasures are magnified and brought nearer; banishing from the mind all sadness, looking at it through the inverted telescope, which makes it small and as remote as possible. What foolishness to suffer to be blindfolded or to have our eyes plucked out! We should have our eyes wide open to all the suffering and misery around us; see the many funerals which pass our door daily; listen to the Word of God; read good books; thus keeping constantly before us the memory of our last end.

II. Incredulity. When men see themselves living riotously, and when they know from the precept of Catholic doctrine that, unless they shun the occasions of sin, unless they

do penance and have a firm purpose of amendment, they will suffer eternal torments. When they are unwilling to change their lives and live a life of penance, they begin to persuade themselves that the doctrine of the Church about the severity of judgment and the eternity of hell is entirely false and not consistent with the thought of a merciful God. And they very easily find arguments to confirm them in this belief. How can a most merciful God inflict eternal torments for one or a few light sins? How can he allow innumerable mortals who are almost all sinners to perish? These doctrines are only the bugaboos of preachers and they do not refer to us. At times they are moved by some sorrow, by the death of a relative, etc., but soon the original thought of their incredulity stifles all fear the same as when pigs, hearing the gruntings of one of their number that has been stuck with the knife, desert their food, but, when death comes, they forget their fear and return to the troughs. But, if men would consider how grave and dangerous a disease sin is, it would not be difficult to persuade themselves that they deserve eternal punishment even though the whole world should be infected by it. The gravity of sin is such that we cannot comprehend it. It is such that, to conquer it, it was necessary for the Son of God to leave his home in heaven and come to earth. When we hear that some one is so sick as not to be content with the doctors in his own city, so that the most skilful from afar are called in, do we not conclude that he is in a very dangerous condition? What must we think of sin when no earthly doctor was of any use; but the Son of God had to be brought from heaven and the most precious medicine made up from his body and blood?

III. Self-love promising a long life. Aristotle says that certain nations attributed all their good deeds to themselves —and all bad deeds and vices to some external cause. If they did anything good, they were anxious to receive reward; if anything evil, they did not wish to accept punishment. From a like root have sprung certain errors of Christian writers, which are ably refuted by St. Augustine. Some asserted that Catholic Christians, dying in sin, would not suffer eternal torments; others held that Heretics, who at some time had been Catholics, would not suffer; others that after judgment all faithful or unfaithful would be saved, whether by their own merits or by the merits of others, etc. All these errors were caused by a blind self-love. It is this that

puffs people up and causes them to fall. St. Peter, following Christ and hearing him predict terrible things about his passion, said: "Lord, this will not be so;" but Christ answered him: "Get thee behind me, Satan, you do not know the things that are of God" (Matt. 16). So reason argues: "Behold how soon you will be old; how soon your days will pass; how soon you will die; it may be this day, month or year." But self-love says: "You shall not die; this shall not be so." But what happened to that rich man who said: "Soul take thy rest, thou hast much goods laid up for many years?" Did he not hear: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee" (Luke 12). Do we not daily hear of sudden and unprovided deaths? Babylon was accused: "Thou hast said I shall be a lady forever: thou hast not laid these things to thy heart, neither hast thou remembered thy last end" (Isaias 47). Of the reprobate: "We have entered into a league with death and we have made a covenant with hell" (Isaias 28).

IV. Presumption on divine mercy. They say that the thief found pardon at the last moment; that peace was promised to men of good will; that good will and sorrow for sin are easily compatible; that God is more prone to be merciful than to punish; that heaven was made for men and not for geese, etc. Many blind mortals, because they see God rich in mercy, although they know that they have very few good works, but rather many bad ones, think, nevertheless, that he will forgive all or accept a part for the whole. But they deceive themselves. Hear Job, who, though a great friend of God, said: "I feared all my works, knowing that thou didst not spare the offender" (9:28). As a king not only does not spare him whom he has exalted and who afterwards becomes rebellious, but is much more incensed against him, so does God act. Did he spare offending angels? Did he spare his only Son, when through love for us he clothed himself with our infirmities? By no means. Vain, therefore, is the presumption of man. For, as God showed his infinite power in the creation of the world and his infinite mercy in redeeming it, so he will show his infinite justice in judging it.

V. Fear of sadness and melancholy, if we keep before our eyes the thought of our last end. Those who argue this way are like Julius Cæsar, who, when asked which kind of death he desired, answered: "A sudden death." And this he ac-

tually met in the Senate, when pierced with twenty-three wounds, he fell at the base of Pompey's statue, "which all the while ran blood." I should agree with Cæsar if there were not a doubtful life after this. But a Christian, unless he is blind, cannot agree with him. There is this difference between a sudden and an anticipated death, that the former comes to one unknowingly, from behind, as it were, and plunges him into untold misery; the latter appears before his eyes and makes him provide for his safety, and finds him ready. A thief while in prison can more seriously think on means for his release than if he were suddenly brought before the judge; so they act most prudently who always have their last end before their eyes. The thought of our last end certainly brings with it sadness and fear of death and judgment; but it does not hasten them, no matter how much you think, as a ship glides on, whether you be asleep or awake. It brings sadness, but not lasting, to those immersed in pleasures; to others a sweet sleep and a longing desire, as to St. Paul, "to be dissolved and be with Christ." Such Christians always rejoice and sing with David: "I rejoiced in those things that were said to me. We will go into the house of the Lord." Finally, it brings a salutary fear. "For although I made you sorrowful by my epistle, I do not repent" (2 Cor. 7: 8, 9). "Now I am glad: not because you were made sorrowful, but because you were made sorrowful unto penance." This momentary fear is followed by external joy.

VI. Supine negligence, when it is said in Isaias 47: 7: "Thou has not laid these things to thy heart, neither hast thou remembered thy latter end," St. Augustine says: "Men die daily, and those who live carry them forth and hold funeral services. No one says: I will amend my life, lest to-morrow I may be dead like he is to-day."

Our friends and relatives die around us daily, and we never think that we, too, like they, shall die. Animals provide for coming storms; sailors provide for them; life-savers provide for them. Foolish mortals, why do you not provide for eternal storms? The Lord formerly complained of the Jewish people: "The kite in the air hath known its time: the turtle and the swallow and the stork have observed the time of their coming: but my people have not known the judgment of the Lord" (Jer. 8: 7). Would that this were said against the Jews alone and not against us also!

The birds of the air know their time to come to us and to leave us. In the springtime they come to build their nests and at the approach of winter they seek warmer and more congenial climes. But we miserable mortals do not know the springtime, that is, the opportunity for doing penance, for pleasing God, for accumulating good works while we are strong and able. Let us not wait for the cold and bitter winter of God's wrath. Moses truly called us a race without wisdom, without prudence. Would that they had known and understood and foresaw their last end. St. Bernard says: "Would that you knew the things of God; that you understood the things of this world; that you foresaw the torments of hell; surely you would dread hell, you would seek heaven and despise the world."

Let us ask with the blind man first for ourselves: "Lord that I may see;" let us ask with Eliseus for our blind brethren: "Lord, open their eyes, that they may see." When a band of robbers find themselves in a hostile country they flee from it and never return; so if we could see ourselves in the midst of enemies—an angry God above us, death before us, judgment behind us, hell beneath us, we would forsake all sinful pleasures and give ourselves up entirely to the contemplation of our last end.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.

WHAT MUST WE DO DURING LENT?

I. Fast. II. Watch. III. Pray. IV. Restrain our desires. V. Study solitude. VI. Fight with the devil.

"Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil" (Matt.4:1).

WHAT spirit led Christ into the desert, unless the spirit which a short while before rested on him in the baptism in the Jordan, and which proceeds from the Father and the Son? With the greatest promptitude, the greatest alacrity, then, did Christ go into the desert, because as St. Ambrose says: "the grace of the Holy Spirit knows no slow endeavors." O that we would enter Lent with such a spirit of action, that we would not be forced, that we would not be sad, that we would merit to be called really the sons of God, according to the apostle: "For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8 : 14). I will believe, therefore, that you begin this season filled with the Holy Spirit, if you strive to do those things which Christ himself did in the desert.

I. Christ fasted, not as a remedy for himself, but as an example for us; for when did Christ need to fast, since he experienced no rebellion of the flesh, much less could he be conquered by it. What the master does for the pupil, Christ does for us. A musician playing for his pupil does not play to learn but to teach the pupil. The harp of the body of Christ is admirably fitted; there is no want of moderation of the passions, no discord of a rational and sensitive appetite of the flesh and the spirit; and hence it was prepared to practise all the acts of virtue, and to fulfil all precepts. Not so our bodies, in which there is a contradiction of spirit and flesh, by which we are prevented from running easily in

the way of God's commandments; the flesh must therefore be crushed; the chords of the passions must be stretched; the senses subjected to reason that they may be in accord with the spirit and will of God. For this reason Lent was instituted by the Apostles that we might, during it, prepare to sing afterwards at Easter the joyous Alleluias of the angels. St. Ambrose says: "He who says he is with Christ, should walk as Christ walked; if, therefore, you wish to be a Christian, you must do what Christ did. He who had no sin fasted forty days and nights; you who have sinned do not wish to fast during Lent. He had no sin, and, yet, he fasted for our sins. What kind of Christian then are you? While Christ is suffering from hunger, you eat; while your Saviour is fasting, you are relishing good things." When Rudolph of Austria was at war with Otto of Bohemia, and suffering greatly from want of water, his soldiers brought him a measure full which they took from a farmer who was carrying it to his men in the field. "Return the measure," said Rudolph, "for not for myself was I thirsting, but for my army;" whereupon the army resolved to suffer every hardship for the sake of such a leader. Will we not cheerfully fast with our Leader Christ, since he does so, not for himself, but for us?

II. He watched, because no one sleeping can be said to fast. Christ is said to have fasted forty days and nights, and the tempter did not find him asleep. His only bed being the hard earth, he was easily and very often aroused. The Lord knew that when men wish to live piously, then are to be found the greatest snares. He was not tempted in Bethlehem, nor in the Temple among the Doctors, nor in Nazareth, nor at the time of his baptism; but during his fasting and austere life; because then the devil especially ensnares man when by penance and reformation of life, he desires to flee from him. Then did Pharao oppress the Israelites with labors and punishments, when they wished to throw off his yoke and sacrifice to the true God in the desert (Exod. 5). We have entered the arena of fasting, and we also will try to throw off the yoke of the devil by penance. He does not leave a stone unturned to prevent us from our good resolve; he prepares the bed on which we may lie sound asleep in our former sins; but we must watch and be on our guard, recalling to mind our manifold sins; exciting remorse in ourselves and preparing for Confession. Who could sleep if he

knew his house was surrounded by thieves? Are we not surrounded by legions of devils, who are doing their utmost to rob us of that most precious treasure, our immortal soul? Should they gain an entrance, eject them through the sacrament of Penance. It will help very much to this, if we add to our corporal watching some time spent in pious reading and prayer. How can soldiers be sluggish when their leader is wide awake? "And Urias said to David: The ark of God and Israel and Juda dwell in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord abide upon the face of the earth: and shall I go into my house to eat and drink?" (2 Kings 11:11). He preferred to sleep before the king's gate, although he was commanded to go into his house.

III. He prayed and meditated because he was led into the desert by the Holy Spirit, a place most suitable for prayer and meditation; for the same reason we must give more time now to prayer and meditation as the Church increases the number of prayers; while she deprives us of bodily food she increases the heavenly food of our souls. Where are we to find the desert to retire into? The Church is that desert, for it is a most suitable place for prayer. At this time especially it resembles a desert; it is made dismal by the exposition of the instruments of the passion; its penitential altars, its hymns of sadness—all which should inspire us with a singular devotion and incite us to sincere compunction and help us to profound meditation. Finally, the Church is called a desert, because, alas, it is too often deserted as the Lord complains: "My house is desolate and you make haste every man to his own house" (Agg. 1). Would that the spirit lead you hither! But how different are the spirits of many! The good spirit of Christ leads him to watching, to prayer and to fasting; the evil spirit of sinners leads them elsewhere; the spirit of vanity to uncharitable gatherings; the spirit of gluttony to an inordinate satisfying of the appetite; the spirit of avarice to gambling; the spirit of intemperance to the loss of all self-respect, to the utter destruction of both body and soul. These are the spirits that entered into the swine and rushed with them into the sea, according to Matt. 8.

St. Augustine says: "Our body is a desert when it is subdued by abstinence; when it appears pallid and wan from thirst; when the whole appearance of man is disfigured by contempt of human things. Then Christ inhabits the desert

of our bosom when he finds our earth squalid from hunger and dry and parched from thirst."

IV. He was with beasts, says St. Mark. But what did he do with them? There is no doubt but that they all ran to him, crouched at his sacred feet, and obeyed promptly the least expression of his will, as they did Adam in Paradise, as they did many saints—St. Francis, St. Theodore, Father Aviedo in India, etc. There is no doubt they were all gentle, and when he moved about they accompanied him; when he stood, they stood; when he lay down, they lay down around him. Would that we could do the same, especially during this season, with our ferocious habits and desires. Our passions are the wild beasts which, before sin, obeyed us and were subject to reason as they were to Adam; after the sin of Adam they began to rebel against reason, as they did against him, and they roam through our mind, our heart, our very being, like wild animals in a forest. Such beasts are:—love and hatred, sorrow and joy, hope and despair, rashness and fear. These beasts must be conquered and brought under subjection and made obey reason. If you have a roaring lion within you, that is, a bitter hatred towards your neighbor, command him to stand still and obey. If you have a leopard in you that trembles at the voice of a little bird, that is, if you have a fear of the sacrament of penance, command him not to fear; if you have the wolf of greed and avarice, command him to make restitution; if you have the panther of gluttony and drunkenness, command him to abstain; if you have the bear of idleness and sloth, command him to engage in prayer, to receive communion often, to assist regularly at mass, etc. When the gentle St. Francis bade the little birds sing, they warbled delightfully; when he bade them be silent, they as promptly obeyed. Let us also command our passions: our love to be fixed on God alone; hatred to be detested as an abominable vice; sorrow to be borne with the patience of Christ, the Man of sorrows; rashness to be reprehended publicly; fear not to be driven away by the difficulty of penance.

V. He was alone except with the angels. The rest of the time he lived in cities among men; now he converses in the desert with angels, for the "angels came to him;" nay, more, they ministered to him, and, according to some writers, they brought food to him. Let us also at this time abstain as much as possible from human conversation, and engage in

angelic in its stead. Man has in his soul something angelic, namely, the superior part of his soul which attends to the affairs of salvation ; and the inferior part, which provides for the temporal concerns ; the former, things angelic ; the latter, things human. During almost the whole year, the inferior is troubled about what we shall eat and drink, what we shall wear, how we shall get rich ; how we shall be elevated in the esteem of men ; scarcely ever does the superior part pay heed to these. So now it must be given an opportunity to study how we are to deplore and extirpate our vices ; how we are to implant virtues and to acquire merits. Birds remain nearly always in the air or on the branches of trees ; they do not come down to earth only when they want food. Let us now seek food for our souls, who have been caring for our bodies our whole life.

But where ? In the desert and in the solitude of our heart ; let us descend from the society of men ; from the tumult of worldly cares ; let us compose the interior man ; let us watch our footsteps that we may be elevated on high with the angels ; that we may more intimately know the sinful habits and defects of our heart. We spend our lives in the midst of such tumult and noise that we cannot hear ourselves and our conscience calling on us to reform. Let us now go to that solitude of the soul like Daniel, who, when about to pray, entered his house by the windows towards Jerusalem and the temple, the other windows having been barred. Let us also bar our senses, cares and thoughts of the world that lead to Babylon ; for in the tumult of the world we are not allowed to worship God as we should, nor to care for our immortal souls.

VI. He fought with the tempter. He is the very same tempter now that tempted Christ, first, with regard to the palate, to break his fast and eat forbidden food. He persuades many that their delicate complexion or weakened state does not oblige them to fast, to make bread of stones, to do away with the severity of fasting and to indulge in all kinds of food. We are commanded by the second precept of the Church to confess our sins and to receive Holy Communion, but he persuades us to cast ourselves down, that is, without previous examination of conscience, without fear of hell to make light of the Sacraments and to receive them unworthily. We are commanded to renew our lives, to give up our former habits, but he shows us the riches and pleasures of this world ;

the riches unjustly acquired, the enmities and the hatreds, and says: What, will you desert us? if you say good-by to your former sinful companions, how will you do without them? if you surrender your unjust gains, how can you keep up your former style of living? who will not scorn you, if you suffer quietly the loss of your good name, and are not revenged on your detractors? But we must fight against the tempter and use the same weapons Christ used: the sword of the Word of God, pious reading and attentive listening to sermons. How can you argue against him, saying: "It is written," unless you read the Scriptures or hear them expounded by Christ's ministers? If you are tempted to break the fast, now can you say: "He that does not hear the Church, let him be to thee a heathen and a publican;" also: "Not in bread alone does man live but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." If tempted regarding Confession—"Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish." With regard to unjust possession of others' goods, St. Augustine says: "Sin is not remitted unless what is stolen is restored." If tempted to hatred and envy—"he who hates his brother kills his own soul." Secondly, by the exclusion of temptations, saying: "Get thee gone, Satan." "The Lord repulsed the enemy and would not allow him to tempt him further," says Origen. Some order the tempter to go before them and they themselves follow him—those who consent to temptation; some order him to go alongside, who wish to be delighted by thought only. Others order him to follow behind who do not wish to destroy the roots of temptation, but to remove it from the eyes for awhile and then return to it. Others finally with Christ expel the tempter altogether. Do not parley with him, lest like Eve you be deceived. Whoever will observe these things during Lent will advance rapidly in the study of virtue, and at the last day will be joyfully received by the angels coming to him, bearing him the palm of victory. They will announce to the world on our resurrection day: "He is not here, he has risen from his sins, he has conquered his enemies, his passions, and the tempter—behold his crown of reward'

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.

THE FOURFOLD TRANSFIGURATION OF MAN.

I. From the state of grace to the state of sin. II. From the state of sin to the state of grace. III. From the delights of this world to hell. IV. From the miseries of this life to eternal joys.

"He was transfigured before them" (Matt. 17 : 2).

WHEN a great prince in gorgeous array prepares for a solemn occasion, a wedding for instance, all his courtiers and vassals put aside their ordinary attire and bedeck themselves in their finest costumes. To-day our Lord the King of all earthly kings appears as a "Spouse coming forth from his Chamber," clothed in a new and wonderful garment, beautiful before the eyes of men while transfigured on the mount he shows his glory. What then remains for us who are in his court, the Church, having put off the old man, but to put on the new, that we may be transfigured with him and become like him? Moses and Elias, who were present at the glory of the transfiguration, "appearing in majesty," are certainly an example for us. We must remember that Satan also transfigured himself into an angel of light and uses every means to have courts and liveried courtiers glittering like himself. We must be careful not to be transformed into that species which pleases rather the devil than Christ our King. Let us see the twofold transfiguration of evil as well as of good. For a double reason man is transfigured either with Christ or the devil—partially and completely. Partially with Christ, when he passes from the state of sin to that of grace—completely, when he passes from this troublesome world to heavenly glory. With the devil partially, when he passes from the state of grace to that of sin—completely, when he passes from the delights of earth to hell-fire. Who will deny that these changes can be called transfigurations wonderful and great?

I. Transfiguration from the state of grace to that of sin is to be feared. This God has pathetically shown the world in Nabuchodonosor, King of Babylon, whose arrogance he punished with a remarkable humiliation, so that cast out from among men, he wandered through the woods as a beast for seven years (Dan. 4).

First, deprived of the use of reason, he used only the imagination and that vitiated, by which he considered himself changed into an ox, and those things only belonging to an ox, he revolved in his mind. In like manner, the sinner is deprived of supernatural light, while he indulges in what are vile and hurtful and counts them good and beautiful; nor does he see the danger of his state who does not fear God his Judge; nor does he seek what is lawful, he dreams of sinful pleasures only; wherefore St. Paul calls sinners darknesses: "For ye were, heretofore, darkness" (Ephes. 5 : 8).

Secondly, he took on a beastly appearance, because the temperament of his body was so changed and became so savage that he inclined only to beastly actions and pleasures. In like manner, the sinner, especially from the custom and habit of sinning, becomes so degenerate, that he should be regarded more as a brute than a man on account of his distorted and depraved will; and hence no longer is he called man by God, but flesh, as we read in Genesis 6 : "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh . . . for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth." In other places men are called different beasts, on account of their different evil habits which liken them to such beasts.

Thirdly, they do not utter human articulate sounds, but beastly ones, for the speech follows the imagination. Where there is a beastly imagination, there also is beastly speech. What sinners are always meditating, the same they give expression to. The ambitious—honors; the avaricious—money and wealth; drunkards—their cups; gluttons—banquets and feasts, etc. These things they speak of in their sleep, when sober, and sometimes at the hour of death.

Fourthly, they walk after the manner of a beast rather than of a human being: with a deformed face, a sharp and hardened skin, nails of an eagle, long and unkempt hair; as to the other members, they are naked and exposed to all the elements; finally crawling on hands and feet on the ground.

He seems to call all these to witness when he says: "My figure has been restored to me." A manner very similar to this is noticed in man deformed by sin. For you see in him the face of conscience so deformed that he does not see the stains of his crimes, or, if he sees them, he hides it in drunkenness or worldly affairs that he may not be forced to behold it. He has a skin so hard and impenetrable that it cannot be pierced by exhortations, prayers, threats or wounds; such a skin as the Ethiopian bulls have, with the hardness of flint throwing off every weapon. Claws of an eagle, to seize the things which appeal to the appetite. Hairs of perpetually fluctuating thoughts, with which all shaggy he is covered from head to foot; a body so deprived of all comeliness, so depraved and so intent on passing goods, that at one time by pride he exposes himself to be laughed at by others; urged by avarice, he lives in hunger and want; by excesses, he destroys his health; he is consumed by anger and hatred; by gluttony and intemperance, he becomes so enervated that he can scarcely walk.

Fifthly, he ate grass like a cow, and this the sinner does, when, despising the good and solid food prepared for him—the Word of God, the Sacraments—he seeks animal food and feasts his mind on the vilest things, such as splendor of dress and gold, the pleasures of wealth, obscene conversations, detractions and calumnies, etc., these are his food; and finally, man, who in baptism was consecrated to God, degenerates and is changed into a wild beast; from the temple of God, he becomes the cave of robbers; from the house of God, the house of vanity.

II. From the state of sin to the state of grace. A type of this we have in Joseph, who was freed from prison, into which he had been cast without any fault of his, by Pharaoh, and raised to the dignity of a prince. He, who a short time before, bound, hand and foot, sat in a loathsome dungeon, squalid and unkempt, suddenly, by order of the king, is led forth, washed and robed in a new garment and crowned with great honors. "And he took his ring from his own hand and gave it into his hand: and he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck; and he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him; and he called him the Saviour of the world" (Gen. 41). What a great and sudden change from the deepest misery to the highest happiness on

earth. Such a change is noticed in man when he is converted and repents of his sins. He who before was bound by the chains of sin, in the darkness of ignorance ; under the power of the demon, squalid and deformed from the habit of sinning so that, as we saw before, he becomes beastly, he by penance is entirely changed into another man. Freed from the prison of the devil, washed from the squalor and filth of his former vices, deprived of the hairs of worldly thoughts and desires, he is endowed with the wonderful gifts of grace. He is clothed with a silken robe—grace—which, as a most gorgeous garment made by the hands of God alone, so adorns and embellishes man that the splendor of all nature, though it be as great as in the angels themselves, is scant and paltry compared with that of grace. No stars can adorn the heavens, no gems a crown, no gold, no purple and fine linen a king as grace adorns the soul ; and if we could contemplate it here, we would prefer, with St. Catherine of Sienna, to die a thousand times, to be even crucified, if we could enjoy the sight of it. He receives a golden ring while he is busy exercising works of virtue, which, with the aid of grace, become golden, agreeable to God and meritorious of eternal life. So he, who before was a thief, now gives freely to the poor ; he who was ready to murder, now bears with his enemy and does good for evil ; he who reveled at the banquet of vice, now wears sackcloth and ashes and crucifies his flesh ; he who was a drunkard, chastises himself by fasting ; he who cursed and swore, appeases God by many prayers, etc., etc. He receives a golden chain around his neck because all the merits, which before were as dead through sin, are now given life and restored to him. These merits, linked together like golden rings, form a most beautiful chain, and gently and without weight bend down the soul with the hope of eternal reward and display it to the admiration of angels. He is seated in the royal carriage, which is peace and tranquillity gently bearing the soul ; which "peace," says St. Paul, "surpasses all understanding." Certainly, whoever finds this peace in himself would not exchange it for all the crowns and scepters of kings. St. Augustine says : "How delightful it suddenly became for me to want for vain pleasures and joys ; and which there was fear before of losing, now there is joy in abandoning." His praises are sung by all, and he acquires not only fame, lost by sin, but also a glorious name, as in the case of Mary Mag.

dalene, who from the greatest sinner became the greatest lover of Christ, and whose praises are on the tongues of all. The same of Matthew, Paul, Zachæus, Mary of Egypt, etc., the stains of whose former lives were not only washed away, but converted to their glory. And this is the change of which Amos speaks: "Seek the Lord, converting darkness into morning" (5 : 8). For what is the sinner but darkness, or the inhabitant of a dark dungeon? However, by penance, he is changed and is converted into a most beautiful golden aurora. We have an example of this change in the Prodigal Son, who, having returned to himself and to his father, is clothed in royal raiment. "But the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us make merry" (Luke 15 : 22).

III. From the joys of this present life to hell—the most terrible transformation of all. A type of this we have in Sampson, who, as long as he nurtured his hair according to the rite of the Nazarenes, was most powerfuland an invincible terror to his enemies; but when, through the deception of Dalilah, his head was shaved, at the same time his strength was lost to him; then with great fury the Philistines rushed upon him, and at first put out his eyes, because, says St. Jerome, "he used his sight badly," for "he had looked on other women and had loved them." And for that brief pleasure he suffered perpetual darkness by the loss of his sight. And this is the first grade of hellish transformation—most dense darkness, or as the Lord calls it "exterior," into which the damned fall after they have been deprived of life and handed over to the power of the demons; because here they loved the internal darkness of the mind, and the works of darkness; because moreover, they used the light of their eyes most criminally for their vicious desires. They led him to the strong city of Gaza, the most famous and most remote of all, because it was most strongly fortified, and because he had brought great disgrace on it when he carried away its gates. In the same manner the reprobate are led to the city of the demons—hell—most remote from heaven, and most strongly fortified. What mountains and valleys surround it! Hear what Abraham says to the rich man in hell: "Between us and you there is fixed a great chaos, so that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor from thence come hither

(Luke 16 : 26). They bound him with chains and threw him into prison. Such is the fate of the damned, who are bound with chains in a space so confined that they cannot move about. They made him turn the grindstone, a punishment inflicted on the most miserable culprits; but that is nothing compared with the grindstone which the damned are compelled to turn in hell. Who can count the stripes and blows and the burnings with hot irons they receive? Who can count the revolutions of that stone throughout eternity? The anger of God will perpetually pursue them, and that cursed stone will revolve forever. "The voice of thy thunder in a wheel," says David; that is, that voice shall thunder against them forever who are turning the wheel of eternity. They led him with great shouts to his deep disgrace; for they were not satisfied to lead him blind to Gaza, where before he had sinfully looked upon strange women and where they deceived him, but, on account of this, they held sacrifices and banquets. Who will explain the shame of this great hero? What a concourse of hostile people while he is led bound; what rejoicings; what reproaches hurled at him; what scoffings at his hair; what vituperations against him and his God! And perhaps they led him through the very entrance, which he before had destroyed, to insult him the more; urging him, if he were a man, to repeat his former feat. Greater by far and more bitter than these will be the imprecations and derisions hurled at the damned by their victorious enemies, the demons. What a transfiguration, from the child of God to the plaything of demons!

IV. From the miseries and calamities of this world to celestial glory—the happiest of all; which change only the just are to expect, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 15 : 51): "We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed." Christ in his transfiguration is a type of this change. In it, his face shone as the sun, denoting the beatific vision, by which the blessed are so refreshed and satiated that in it alone they will be happy, and will possess everything they desire. His garments became white as snow; by which we understand the adornments of body and soul in the blessed. The voice of his Father was heard saying: "This is my beloved Son," etc.; representing the delights of the senses in the blessed. Moses and Elias appeared talking with him; so it will be in heaven—a great society of the blessed, varied, most resplendent and most delightful. A bright cloud over-

shadowed them, denoting the royal blue heavens, the most clear, the most serene, most secure and most ornate. Therefore, the elect, on the day of resurrection, will be greatly transfigured with Christ, when they will pass from darkness to the sight of eternal light—God ; when they will receive, for the filth of a mortal body, a glorified one, that is, brilliant, subtle, agile and immortal ; for sorrow and anguish they will experience all the delights of the senses ; they will pass from the society of persecutors and reprobates to the most agreeable companionship of the blessed ; finally, they will desert this valley of tears for the eternal mansions of heaven, where there are many nobles whose possession is called paradise, whose tabernacles are made of light, whose life is God, whose conversation is immortal, whose garments are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb, on whose heads are placed crowns of purest gems and gold ; and the King of that region is most powerful, whose name is the God of Gods and the Lord of Lords ; whose messengers are called Angels, whose garments are all alike and whose touch is as a burning fire. The city of this king is most renowned and is called the kingdom of Christ ; its wall is made of the purest gold, having twelve gates ; in each of these hangs a priceless pearl ; and these gates are named for the twelve apostles. There is a most wonderful temple there containing the Holy of holies, and a golden altar before which stands a remarkable man, holding a harp and exhorting all to join in the praises of the King : " Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise ye him in the high places. Praise ye him all his angels : praise ye him all his hosts " (Ps. 148). And this man's name is David, son of Jesse. And the streets of this city are paved with the purest gold ; its river flows with eternal life ; its trees bear fruit every month, and their leaves produce a soothing balm for souls ; its light is unerring, and its gates are never closed ; there, there is no night, no darkness ; but always joy and perpetual peace. May Christ Jesus, who was transfigured today, deign to lead us to this transfiguration !

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT.

WATCHFULNESS OF THE DEVIL, BY WHICH HE GUARDS SINNERS, HIS SLAVES.

I. He entangles them in sin. II. He does not harass them. III. He flatters them. IV. He occupies them with secular pursuits. V. He prevents them from wishing to be converted. VI. He afflicts them about to reform. VII. When converted, he insults them. VIII. When free, he again ensnares them.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth" (Luke 11 : 21).

It is related that the devil, having taken possession of a certain holy man, when asked his name, replied: "We are three who live in this man, and I am called 'closing the heart'; my business is to close the heart of the sinner against contrition. If, by chance, he escape me, and is filled with sorrow for sin, I have another companion called 'the mouth;' whose office is to persuade the sinner against confession; if he fails, I have another called 'closing the purse,' who advises the sinner after confession not to restore ill-gotten goods, and consequently not to comply with that part of the Sacrament—Satisfaction." Those demons were very much like the ones mentioned in the gospel, which, according to Luke, made the man dumb, and according to Matthew, both blind and deaf. Blind, lest he should consider the enormity of his sins; dumb, lest he confess them, and deaf, lest he listen to the advice of his confessor warning him to make restitution, not to bear malice, to give up his sinful mode of living. The devil fortifies himself after the manner of a tyrant after he has occupied a fortified town. He knows that, especially during the holy season, a bitter war will be waged against him and that he will be overthrown; and therefore the Church places to-day's gospel before us to instruct us in the wiles and snares of the devil, and to warn us

from becoming his willing slaves. In the same gospel, two captains are fighting for our souls—Christ and the devil. Christ has conquered the demon and has ejected him from his stronghold; and this he will readily do for all sinners, if they faithfully co-operate with him. Let us see how the devil works to keep his slaves in subjection.

I. After the devil has brought any one under his power by the commission of mortal sin, he labors to entangle him, and in a certain way binds him, lest he retrace his footsteps. "The spirit has bound him in his toils," says Osee 4, as the King of Babylon did with King Mannasses, who says: "I was so bent with the weight of iron chains, that I could not raise my head." Thus also he bound David, who laments: "The cords of the wicked have encompassed me" (Ps. 118). "And behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years and she was bowed together; neither could she look upwards at all" (Luke 13:11). The sinner is bound while he adds sin to sin, until he no longer fears it. The devil urges him to repeat again and again a sin committed, until little by little, a habit is formed from which it becomes almost impossible to extricate himself. The habit of sin is a strong rope, which is composed of many slender cords, each of which may be easily broken, but woven together readily resist the ordinary strength of man, as St. Augustine knew and lamented. The devil uses many other means to ensnare the sinner; some he joins to evil societies, which strongly hold them; others to great dignity and honors, which through shame they will not give up. As the spider, when he sees the poor fly caught in the net, enwraps his body with more web, and leaves him there secure until he is ready to devour him, so the devil acts with the sinner. But the sinner must not, therefore, be cast down and discouraged—as St. Augustine broke his chains, so can the sinner by the grace of God, as Sampson did with the ropes that bound him. Confide strongly in God, and, fortified by the hope of his assistance, do what is in your power. He will help you. How often have we not seen good come from evil!

II. He does not injure them after he has them in his net; nor does he afflict them with temptations, but leaves them in tranquillity and peace. The reason is, because he is in full possession of them; as a dog neither barks at nor bites those in the house—only strangers. Hunters do not trap domestic animals—but wild ones. So does the devil with men. He

has despoiled them of everything—there is nothing more to take from them. St. Chrysostom says: "Sailors with an empty vessel do not fear pirates, for they do not labor to destroy an empty ship; but if it be loaded with a precious cargo—gold and valuable gems then there is every fear that all will be lost; so the devil does not pursue the sinner but the just because the prize is more valuable. He bitterly assails and tempts the just. He tries hard to occupy the house already cleaned and adorned. In this way he afflicted holy Job.

III. He flatters them and fills their ears with his seductive words that they sleep securely. If their conscience begins to trouble them he quiets them by telling them that allowance will be made for youth; that death is a long way off; that there are many others like them; that God is merciful, etc. He proposes many fictitious pleasures never to be had, and often promises mountains of gold. So the servants of Pharao assisted Abraham, while they brought his wife to Pharao. The fisherman, when the fish is hooked, does not immediately draw him out but reels off the line until he is sure that he is safely hooked; so the devil acts. The Babylonians ordered the captive Israelites to sing with their harps, so that they might forget their country. In like manner the devil urges us by various flatteries to forget our former state in which we lived piously; but if you are wise you will answer with the Israelites: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgot." As the glories of the sunset disappear when night sets in, so shall the glories and splendor of this world when death arrives. Then he persuades them that death is far off; they have a long time yet to live and many opportunities for repentance. Of him God says to Job: "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning" (41). His eyes are the counsels and thoughts which he suggests to his slaves; they are not like the shades of even, but like the early dawn, because he does not suggest them in the evening of life, at the hour of death, but as soon as they arrive at the use of reason—in the dawn of life while there is a long day before them, and thus it is not difficult to hold them captives in sin.

IV. He keeps the mind and intelligence busily occupied with worldly affairs. So the hawker plucks out the eyes of the hawk lest he fly away; so did the Philistines with Sampson, and then made sport of him. So does the devil with

the sinner—he plucks out his eyes that he may not consider his last end—may not turn away from the foulness of his sins —may think nothing of the future, but everything of the present. He destroys their hearing that they may hear neither the Word of God nor the voice of conscience. When the followers of Moloch were sacrificing boys to the idol, they sounded the drums lest the cries of the children should be heard by their parents ; so the devil fills the ears with all worldly sounds, lest they hear the threats of an angry God, and the cries of a stricken conscience deploring its lost virtue. He deprives them of the power of speech, especially in confession, lest they tell their sins. In the life of St. Francis we read that there was a Brother renowned for his sanctity, and so careful about the observance of silence, that he would confess only by signs. St. Francis, one day hearing him highly commended by the others, said : "Let him be admonished to confess ordinarily once or twice a week ; if he does not, then it is a temptation of the devil and a fraudulent deceit." When they advised him so he placed his hand on his mouth, and shaking his head, he refused to make an oral confession. What happened ? After a few days he returned to his wicked life and died a miserable death.

V. To those desiring conversion, he proposes and exaggerates the gravity of sin, the difficulty of conversion, the severity of penance, the ineffable delights of sin, etc. When the mourners were bewailing the daughter of Jairus as dead, the Lord said : "She is not dead but sleepeth ;" so, when the devils can succeed in no other way, they fill the soul with despair, and sing a requiem over it as though it were lost forever. How, they say, will you confess such a sin ; how can you ever repeat it, how can you with such shame leave that sinful company ? St. Augustine says that trifles of trifles and vanities of vanities fought against him while he was considering his conversion. So the devil held Judas, having urged him to sin and afterwards so exaggerated his crime, as to finally cast him into despair. You must answer the devil : "Depart from me ! my soul is not dead, but sleeps in the Lord, by whose grace it can be quickened !" Then, again, he urges delay from day to day and in the meantime, he is devising means to more surely secure his victim.

VI. He afflicts those about to leave him, as Pharao did the Israelites, with labors and stripes. The weight of the bucket is not felt until it is drawn from the well, so the weight of

sin at the beginning of conversion. With what difficulty you confess—how irksome to give up the long-contracted habit of sinning. This is shown in the life of St. Basil, where there is mention of a youth who had sold himself to the devil, and when he desired to be converted, he was filled with unearthly shouts and yells. A cat does not harass the mouse in her possession, but plays with it; but if it tries to run away, then she follows it and seizes it with her sharp claws. How many experience this when they wish to join the Church —to leave the world and enter religion—to give up a life of shame! So that unclean spirit, when Christ threatened him, cried out and tore the boy so fiercely before he left him, that every one thought he was dead. So the devil acts with the sinner; he does not trouble him when he has him; but when about to depart, forced by divine power, he suggests to the mind most filthy thoughts. Let us despise the insults of the demon and persevere in our good resolutions and works of piety. The devil may terrify, but he cannot conquer unless we wish it.

VII. He insults the newly converted through detractors and backbiters, as the Jews did, saying to the paralytic: "It is the Sabbath: you are not allowed to take up your bed." So they treated the blind man whom the Lord had healed, throwing him out of the synagogue, and heaping insults upon him. This they did to Zacchæus, Matthew and Mary Magdalene after their conversion.

VIII. He lays snares for the newly converted, taking with him seven more devils worse than himself, as the Lord says; and if he sees them negligent, throwing aside all care of salvation, giving up good works and taking delight in the pursuit of vanity; again he besieges the lost castle and easily recovers it to himself. Therefore, after our hard-earned victory, let us watch carefully and always be on our guard, lest we lose what cost us so much.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT.

PREROGATIVES OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD ON EARTH.

I. Interior light is not found in the wicked. II. Divine protection is not found in them. III. Sufficient corporal sustenance is not found in them. IV. Hearing of prayers is not found in them. V. Health of soul is not found in them. VI. The odor and authority of a good name are not found in them. VII. Joy in passing from this life is not found in them.

"The men therefore sat down in number, about five thousand" (John 6 : 10).

Among other causes which we saw last Sunday why many serve the world and its vices, neglecting God and virtue, this is not the least : a certain general error in which men live obstinately persuaded that all reward for serving God is postponed to a future state—none whatever in this life. They, therefore, consider the way of virtue hard, and devoid of any good or consolation. "For as the king insulted over holy Job : so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life saying : where is thy hope for which thou gavest alms, and buriest the dead" (Tobias 2 : 15, 16) ? So the wicked in Malachy 3 : 14 : "He laboureth in vain that serveth God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked sorrowful before the Lord of hosts ?" The Church truly refutes this pernicious error, especially on this Sunday, when she orders the servants of God in the midst of their fast to be joyful and cheerful. "Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and make a compact all you who love her, rejoice with great joy !" The history of to-day's gospel refutes it, in which Christ feeds his followers in the barren desert. The history of the march of the Israelites from Egypt through the desert to the promised land refutes it, and this history the Church begins to read to-day. In that bitter and prolonged journey,

God showed many signs of his goodness to his people, by which they were so wonderfully refreshed and comforted that they preferred traveling and solitude to Egyptian slavery. As this journey of the Hebrews represents the road of virtue which the just follow, departing from the slavery of this world; so the benefits which God showered on the Hebrews on that journey truly represent the graces which God will give to those who will faithfully follow him through this weary life.

I. A pillar of fire led them through the unknown desert and warned them when to proceed and when to rest—it preceded them when they were to go forward, and stood still when they were to rest. Nor did it lead them through the land of the Philistines, lest being overpowered by the hosts of their enemy they should be returned to Egypt (Exod. 13).

An angel directed that pillar of fire. So the servants of God have an interior light by which they can see clearly what they should see: God and his attributes, his benefits, his providence in governing the world—in sending good and evil. They know themselves, their defects, their weakness against which they may safely guard. They know the things necessary for salvation, what they should believe, what they should do. They know the gravity of sin, its wiles, dangers and temptations. They know those things that belong to their state and office. They consider their last end and prepare for it. Finally, they know how to apply the remedies in time to their defects and falls. Whence they are represented in the Apocalypse 4, by those animals that have eyes before and behind. "A net is spread in vain before the eyes of them that have wings" (Prov. 1 : 17). Those having wings are the saints and elect of God who have the wings of faith, hope and charity and of the other virtues by which they fly to the contemplation of heavenly things; they have spiritual eyes with which they watch out for the snares of the old enemy, and thus avoid sin. In vain is the net spread, that is, the net of snares of the devil, before the eyes of the holy, because they can easily conquer him, because their conversation is about heavenly things. For they do not see the face of sin but its back; they pay no attention to the pleasures it proposes, but to the evils which follow it: grief, shame, the worm of conscience, judgment and hell. The guardian angel is wont to illumine them and direct them in their acts, as St. Frances of Rome well knew, who consulted

him as her teacher in all things. The servants of the devil have not this light. "We have groped for the wall, and, like the blind, we have groped as if we had no eyes; we have stumbled at noonday as in darkness, we *are* in dark places as dead men" (Isaias 59 : 10).

What can be greater blindness than to sell eternal goods for temporal gain and paltry, evanescent pleasure; to see death so often and not to provide against it; not to fear hell; to groan under the yoke of sin and not throw it off? to be covered with wounds and not seek a remedy?

The Egyptians lived in such utter darkness that no one dared move from his place; while the Hebrews, however, lived in light—so the wicked in this world live in darkness—the just in light.

II. By the pillar of cloud he protected them partly from the enemy, as when he enclosed the Hebrews and repulsed the attack of the pursuing Egyptians, covering these with darkness and illuminating the former. Partly from the heat of the sun, which in the desert was very great (Deut. 32). God as an eagle flew above them, and spread his wings over them, and carried them on his shoulders. In the same manner he hovers about the just, and as the eagle directs his eyes to the nest and its young, so the eyes of the Lord are fixed on the just. Hence the just are always joyful and glad, because they know they are under the shadow of God's protection. When Pharao could not follow with his chariots and horse, the Hebrews with uncovered heads went forward. So the just live in this world with uncovered heads, and in the midst of dangers: they need no head-covering, since they know they are under the shadow of the wings of God. When St. Martin fell among thieves who were to put him to death, he said he feared nothing, since he knew he was in the power of God. Other examples: the three boys in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, Susanna, Job, Tobias, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, David, etc., etc.

The just have in themselves present and ready a reserve of many soldiers for all dangers. When the heart is afflicted, the blood from all parts rushes thither to lend aid; so when the soul of the just is hard pressed, all the virtues rush to her assistance and force the enemy to capitulate. Now faith excites it, now charity, now hope, again obedience, patience, etc. Faith teaches to rely on God for the saving medicine; hope shows that in a short while they shall be free from

this wicked world; charity shows that they are become like Christ; obedience subjects the will to the divine will; patience consoles, etc. The wicked, on the other, hand are deprived of this good, because they are without God's help; and hence they are exposed to the enemy and to the heats of temptation. So of the impious Chanaans say Caleb and Josue: "Fear ye not the people of this land, for we are able to eat them up as bread. All aid is gone from them; the Lord is with us, fear ye not" (Numbers 14:9). They are as a flock without a shepherd, a ship without a captain, an army without a general. They have not in themselves the help of virtues; but are found weak and exhausted from many temptations and trials and are easily overcome; and by impatience, double the weight of their crosses, and, like bread, are devoured by the devil.

III. He supplied what was necessary for the sustenance of the body: as the manna from heaven, the water from the rock. "Your garments are not worn out, neither are the shoes of your feet consumed with age" (Deut. 29:5). So, also, whatever is necessary for the bodies of the just, God does not permit to be wanting; and although ordinarily there is no abundance, for that would be dangerous, however he supplies sufficient; as he gave the manna to the Israelites, and forbade them to collect more than they could eat; nor should they keep any for the following day. "Fear not, my son; we have indeed a poor life, but we shall have many good things if we fear God and depart from all sin and do that which is good" (Tobias 4:23). "Fear the Lord all ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him; the rich have wanted and have suffered hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good" (Ps. 33). "Better is a little to the just than great riches of the wicked; for the arms of the wicked shall be broken in pieces" (Ps. 36). Because the former trust in the Lord; they are not avaricious nor prodigal; they do not abuse the gifts of God; the wicked trust to lying and fraud and are always in want. He adds: "They shall not be confounded in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be filled." Again: "I have been young and now am old, and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread." We, therefore, see the difference between the good and the wicked with regard to the necessaries of life. But some may say it often happens that the good must go beg-

ging and the wicked have plenty. As to begging, David speaks of those who took pity on others by giving alms; as to sustenance, the just were not deprived of that. But you say many suffer from extreme poverty. But what if they are not just? Surely God has not promised the necessaries to sinners—only to the good. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these shall be added to you" (Matt. 6 : 33). Very many beggars have nothing of divine things because they do not take care of them; what wonder if earthly things are not added to them. If they are just, they will at least be patient and as content in their poverty as Lazarus was. The poverty and want of the wicked are fully shown in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus.

IV. As often as they asked anything God heard their prayers; to their desires and complaints he listened; he made the bitter waters sweet; gave them food from heaven, water from the rock, and cured them of the serpent's bite. He was so kind to them that Moses said: "Neither is there any other nation so great that hath gods so nigh them as our Lord is present to all our petitions" (Deut. 4 : 7). He acts the same way towards the just who in all their trials have ready recourse to him. They have the express promise of Christ: "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15 : 7). "What else is this," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "than to constitute the just man lord of creation, and to give to him the keys of heavenly treasures, and to make him in a measure omnipotent." David proves that the just man has life and good days, because "the eyes of the Lord are on the just, and his ears open to their prayers." If they foresee evil coming, they cry out to God, and they find his ears open. If they do not foresee the danger, God watches over them, and either warns them to cry out or by some other means averts the impending danger. David says: "The just cried out and the Lord heard them." Joshua made the sun stand still; Elias suspended the waters in the clouds, and released them at will. Many saints in the New Law also did wonderful things. But you say: "Why do not I and so many others experience this good?" Because you are not just. "And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away my eyes from you: and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear you: for your hands are full of blood" (Isaias 1 : 15). If you were good you would receive

what you ask. He adds : "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from my eyes ; and then come and accuse me, saith the Lord ; and if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow."

V. He preserved them strong and in good health during the whole journey. "There was not among their tribes one that was feeble" (Ps. 104). They needed this strength on account of the journey. Otherwise in the just it is not often found, because they do not need it ; they are compensated by a better health, which is security of conscience and tranquillity of soul, by which they despise and even make sweet the bitter ; they spurn dangers, laugh at the tempestuous waves of the world, and know not fear. St. Chrysostom says : "As he who on a rock laughs at the waves as he sees them break with mighty force on the shore and dissolve into foam, so the good man, secure in virtue, fears not the ragings of hell itself, but is tranquil and composed." As in famine, war, tempest, sickness or death itself, he is calm, according to Prov. 12 : "Nothing shall sadden the just whatever shall happen to him." The wicked, on the other hand, are disturbed in mind whenever they are sick, when they read of accidents, whenever it thunders, when there is lightning, when they see death, when they think of their last end, as Felix, who was terrified when he heard St. Paul speaking of the last judgment (Acts 24). From this good follows peace of heart and liberty of mind, which the wicked have not ; who are ever at war with themselves ; who obey their evil inclinations, and are held captive by them. For this Diogenes chided Alexander the Great, saying that he himself served the gods, and Alexander served his cupidities ; by far a worse slavery. The just man loves nothing so much that he is not ready to lose it ; the wicked fears nothing so much that he is not ready to embrace and follow.

VI. He gave them fame and esteem before all peoples ; also authority and terror with the races (Deut. 2 ; Jos. 2, 9, 11). Balaam, who was called to curse them, could only bless them. "How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel!" As woody valleys, as gardens irrigated near thy streams, and tabernacles which the Lord has placed as cedars near the waters. In the same way, God procures for his servants, if not suddenly, at least by degrees, the good esteem and the odor of a good name, and even terror with the wicked, so that they are unwilling,

if they wished to be honored, and are forced to be made great of. The just are, as Balaam says, "like cedars near the waters," always green and decked with leaves; that is, preserving their reputation, as David also says: "He shall live like a tree that is planted near running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season; and his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper" (Ps. 1). They are feared by the wicked as Moses was feared by Pharao, because he was a great man in the land of Egypt and among its people (Exod. 11). John the Baptist was feared by Herod (Mark 6); Jacob by the Chanaans (Gen. 35). So that God makes those who fear him terrible to all. The wicked are like the dust which the wind drives from the face of the earth—they do not preserve their foliage—an honorable fame; but at length lost by their vices they become the ridicule of men; and the wind of evil rumor robs them of honor and scatters their leaves to the earth and so they become dust. The dust is caught up by the wind, and flies through the air for awhile, but soon falls to earth and becomes mud, to be trampled on by the feet of men. "The glory of the sinner is dung and worms: to-day he is lifted up, and to-morrow he shall not be found, because he is returned into his earth" (1 Maccab. 2:62, 63).

VII. He strengthened them by the hope of the promised land; for when they were not far off, he showed them the fruits of it, from which they could know his goodness, especially by that great bunch of grapes. So the just are animated by and rejoice in the hope by which, as by a ring, they see and judge the goods promised them in heaven. Hence, in all their necessities, they comfort and strengthen themselves, as an anchor a ship. "Who have fled for refuge to hold fast the hope set before us. Which we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm" (Heb. 6:18, 19). As an anchor holds and preserves unharmed the ship in the raging waves, so hope holds firm the soul in the midst of the agitations of this world. Only when the anchor is in the depths of the sea, is it of avail; so hope only in the highest heaven. God shows to his elect very often some signs of predestination, by which they are encouraged and stimulated to progress in virtue. Sometimes he gives them a taste of eternal happiness. Finally, the just would not exchange this hope for all the wealth of the world. Hence Job, 19, joyfully exclaims: "This my hope is laid up in my bosom." The wicked have

not this anchor. "For the hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm, and a smoke, that is scattered abroad by the wind" (Wisdom 5).

VIII. He gave them a most happy and most joyful entry into Palestine, while he led them on dry land through the Jordan; such a joyous spectacle that David (Ps. 113) says: "The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock." The mountains and hills laughed at the sea and Jordan, for he adds: "What ailed thee, O sea, that thou didst flee: and thou, O Jordan, that thou wast turned back?" Such will be the joyful exit of the just from this life. They will enter Jordan, the river of judgment, without fear; they shall laugh at death saying with the Apostle: "O grave, where is thy victory: O death, where is thy sting?"

PASSION SUNDAY.

MOTIVES FOR CONTRITION FOR THOSE WHO ARE AFFLICTED WITH SIN.

I. God convinces the sinner. II. Christ convinces the sinner. III. His neighbor convinces the sinner. IV. All creatures convince the sinner.

"Which of you shall convince me of sin?" (Jno. 8 : 46).

In the forty-fourth chapter of Genesis we read that, after Joseph had filled with corn the sacks of his brethren, he ordered his steward to place his silver cup in the mouth of Benjamin's sack and when they were on their journey to pursue them and accuse them of having stolen the cup. He did so and they became indignant. "They speedily took down their sacks to the ground, and every man opened his sack." When the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, "they rent their garments, and, loading their asses again, returned into the town." Who cannot readily imagine the fear that filled their souls? But, while they, though innocent, acknowledged their fault and prostrated themselves before Joseph, they were most kindly received by him. It seems to me that at this time our true Joseph, Christ the Saviour, does the same thing, not because he accuses us of a feigned theft, but because he very well knows that we carry thefts of sin—the sacks of our consciences. Wherefore he himself, especially at this time to restore us to his friendship, sends his stewards of the Church, the priests, to examine our sacks and to search our consciences. Which one of us can say that he has no theft in his sack? Who will dare say with Christ: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" Immediately John will accuse us when he says: "If we say that we have no sin,

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 Epist. 1 : 8). It remains, therefore, for us with Joseph's brethren to rend not only our garments but our hearts, as Joel says : "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (2 : 13). Let us rend them by true contrition and compunction of heart, and with this contrition let us return to our Saviour by oral confession that we may merit to receive from him the much coveted friendship. But, as many like those brethren will not acknowledge their faults, I shall accuse them that they may understand what a grave and deplorable thing sin is.

I. God accuses you against whom you have especially sinned, whose glory and regal crown you have stolen and to whom in consequence you have done the greatest injury. You ask how you have done this ? Listen. Have you not done it when contrary to the express will and command of God you have adhered to creatures and worshiped them above all else, you have preferred them to God and placed them on his throne ; have you not by this driven God, your legitimate King, from his throne, while you rebelled against him and acted in direct opposition to his will ? For : "Is not he thy father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee and created thee ?" (Deut. 32 : 6). How would you feel, if unknowingly you had killed your father and afterwards found that it was he ? Oh, if we only had eyes to see who he is against whom we have sinned ! We knowingly, willingly and with malice have offended God our Father, who is our greatest benefactor. How do we live, move and have our being unless from him ? Are these not continuous benefits of God : the earth which nourishes us, the air which we breathe, the bread and water which sustain us, the sun which illumines us, the fire which warms us ? "And if these things be little, I shall add far greater things unto thee," as Nathan said to David (2 Kings 12: 8). And you will not repent of having offended such a benefactor ? Out on you, and go to the lions ! John Osorius narrates that in Spain a certain lion was very fond of his keeper and lovingly admitted him to his cage. One day when the keeper appeared in a strange garb the lion, not recognizing him, attacked him and tore him to pieces. At length, perceiving that it was his keeper he had killed, the lion became inconsolable and refused all kinds of food. What shall we say to this ? The lion knows and grieves for having offended his keeper ; and man will not grieve for having offended his preserver ? O

blind and miserable mortals, if you did not know when you sinned; behold now and contemplate him. Is it not he who nourishes you and clothes you, enriches you, makes you rulers of all creatures, and gives you angels for guardians? You have broken his laws, you have burst his bonds; you have stolen his glory and given it to Mammon and Bacchus. "Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God" (Jer. 2:19). More bitter indeed than to have been left by God (if however you love God). For who will doubt that it is more bitter for the lover to have offended the beloved than to have been offended by him? St. Paul said he was ready to become an anathema for his brethren, to be separated from them; but he never was ready to desert Christ, nor cease to be loved by him. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . Neither death, nor life, nor angels, etc. (Rom. 8:35, 38).

II. Christ accuses you; for, O sinner, you have stolen his cup, the merit of his passion, which he himself called his chalice. Christ would not listen to Peter, who with drawn sword wished to prevent him from undergoing his passion. "The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). More keenly will Christ feel it, if after having drained that chalice on the cross he finds that his blood was shed in vain. It is a greater injury to steal from one a thing already bought than a thing yet to be paid for. Recount, O sinner, what Christ spent for you and for me, what he did and what he suffered; and see if you have not reason to deplore your prodigality. Did he not for our sakes descend from heaven? did he not clothe himself with our frailty? did he not seek our salvation in many journeys? did he not preach and show us the way to heaven? did he not suffer all kinds of torments, crucifixion and finally death itself? and you despise and make light of all these, and do not weep over your madness? If two brothers were held captives by the Turks with the understanding that within a certain time they would be put to death unless a large ransom were paid for them, and their father hearing this should travel near and far begging the money and then bring it them to obtain their freedom; if those captives should begin to indulge in revelry and spend the money with the Turks, their enemy, until there was nothing left for their ransom, would not this be an enormous crime? would it not be the basest kind of ingratitude to so good a father? When their day of

death was drawing near should they not with the prodigal son enter into themselves and bitterly bewail their ingratitude and folly? What else did Christ do for thirty-three years but collect the price of our redemption? How many calumnies, injuries, insults and torments did he suffer for our sakes? And what do sinners do? They indulge in forbidden pleasures, squander the price of redemption, nay, even cast it away. "But they have thought to cast away my price: I ran in thirst" (Ps. 61: 5). Enter into yourselves then, O sinners, and see what and how much you have lost, what kind of father you have offended. Say to yourselves: Was I baptized in vain? confirmed in vain? did I confess in vain? are all those things which Christ did, said and suffered of no benefit to me? am I to remain a captive of the devil? Alas, what have I done? But this is not enough for many sinners. They repeatedly by the commission of new sins crucify Christ. "They have added to the grief of my wounds" (Ps. 68: 27). O unheard of ingratitude! "Who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath esteemed the blood of the testament unclean" (Heb. 10: 29). "Crucifying to themselves the Son of God, and making a mockery of him" (Heb. 6: 6). They act as the soldiers did on Calvary when they rudely stripped Christ of his garment, thus re-opening his wounds and adding new torture. Alexander the Great in one of his drunken revels transfixed with a spear his deliverer, Clytus, who had cut off the hand Rhosacer, striving to slay his master. Becoming sober and seeing the body of Clytus, he was so overcome with grief as to wish to kill himself with the same spear. Prevented from doing this, he shut himself up for three days, refusing all food and wishing to starve to death. Infinitely more do we owe to Christ, who restrained the sword of an angry God about to slay us, and who by his merits returned it to its scabbard. How, therefore, does the sinner feel who remembers too late that he has afflicted his preserver, and, as far as he could, has slain him?

III. Your neighbor accuses you, whom you have afflicted with many injuries and from whom in a manner you have stolen a cup. First, by doing him bodily injury. Examine your conscience and it will tell you. Some by chance poor in the goods of this world I have defrauded; by strength or fraud I have extorted from them what they did not owe me; to other poor ones seeking my aid I not only have given

nothing when I could but have added to their affliction by opprobrium and calumny; the good name and esteem of others I have striven to lessen and to render them hateful and despicable before God and man. Secondly, in the goods of the soul. How often by my crimes have I provoked others to sin? How often was I a stone of offense and a rock of scandal to others, when it would have been better for me, with a stone about my neck, to be cast into the sea? How often were my parents, children, brothers or neighbors punished for my sins? for often many are punished for the sins of one. And what is greatest of all is that perhaps even now some are in hell, whose damnation I was the cause of or whom, at least, I helped to be damned. How often have I seen some one rushing headlong to hell whom I might have saved by good advice? what should be my feelings if I were to understand that even one was burning in hell on my account? Could I easily expiate that sin? Judas, having betrayed Christ and seeing him condemned, was struck with remorse, returned the thirty pieces of silver and went and hanged himself. So great did he regard his sin, and what kind of condemnation was it? To a temporal death which Christ freely invited; and yet his traitor despaired on account of his crime. What do you say who by your bad example, teaching and deceit have betrayed not one, but many, to eternal death? Will any one, on your account, be punished in hell fire for all eternity? Have you caused any evil that can never be repaired for all eternity? Will you go to heaven, who have cast another into hell? Do you not fear for having been the cause of so many suffering in Purgatory? How many parents cry out from that fire against their children, through whose fault they are there? how many children against parents? Are you not that wicked servant, who, unwilling to have pity on his fellow-servant, choked him? While you have despoiled your brother of his goods; or persecuted him with hatred and envy; or led him into sin, in so much have you choked him and sent him to hell.

IV. All creatures accuse you, from whom you in a manner steal the silver cup, that is, that order and natural inclination, which they have to serve their Creator "For all things serve thee" (Ps. 118 : 91). When you withdraw them from their Creator and force them to serve you contrary to the will of their legitimate Lord; such your intellect, strength, form, wealth, dignities, the mixed elements, the

stars, all creatures. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that made it subject, in hope; because the creature, also, itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth, and is in labor even till now" (Rom. 8 : 20–22). Therefore creatures groan because, unwilling, they are subject to the sinner : why not rather the sinner groan, who brings such misery on harmless creatures? By his rebellion against God he causes for himself and others storms, wars, plagues, etc. Are not these miseries sadly deplored by all? Much more so should sins, the cause of those, be deplored. Let us therefore open the sacks of our consciences and behold the thefts we have committed against God, Christ, our neighbor and all creatures, that we may rend and crush our hearts. David opened his sack and watered his couch with his tears. The Publican opened his sack and struck his breast, nor did he dare to raise his eyes to heaven. Magdalene opened her sack and she washed the feet of Christ with her tears and dried them with her hair. Peter opened his sack and going out he wept bitterly. And so it shall finally happen that after our error is known by the heavenly Joseph, Christ, we shall be admitted to his most loving embrace.

PALM SUNDAY.

THE PROXIMATE PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

I. Cleanness of heart. II. Spiritual hunger. III. Reverence. IV. Humility. V. Thanksgiving.

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 21 : 9).

When I behold the triumphal pomp of Christ in to-day's Gospel, I seem to see the same Christ the Lord coming to us from heaven in the Holy Eucharist. Everywhere I see the profoundest humility joined with the highest glory. The profoundest humility of Christ appears when seated on an ass he descends from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem ; his highest glory appears while the multitude strew the way with their garments and palm branches, crying out : "Hosanna to the Son of David." What emperor ever triumphed on an ass ? who was ever received with such honor ? Now let us see Christ coming in the Eucharist. Does he not there descend from heaven to us on earth, hiding under the small species of the Sacrament, conspicuous with no external splendor ? And yet however before him in the Eucharist, Kings and Popes with the universal Church prostrate themselves. Most fittingly therefore while the Holy Eucharist is being consecrated and elevated that same hymn is sung which the multitude sang in his former triumph : "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord : Hosanna in the highest." Since at this time the same victor enters our hearts in Holy Communion ; it remains for us to see with what reason, what honor, we receive him. This to-day's multitude shall teach us.

I. They divested themselves of their garments and spread

them in the way by which he was to pass lest he should be soiled with filth and mud. What else does this mean, unless that we should cleanse our heart, in which we are to receive the Lord, from all stain not only of mortal sins (which is absolutely necessary) but, as far as we can, of venial also; likewise of all inordinate affection to the former sins, sensual desires and secular thoughts; so that we may not only show the honor due our heavenly guest but that we may also merit to receive from him the celestial reward for entertaining him. For since he loves purity in the highest degree, the purer we are the more worthy shall we be of such a guest and of the grace he brings with him. Let us hear St. Augustine: "I ask you, brethren, is there any one who would place his garment in a filthy chest? And if a precious garment is not placed in such a chest, how is it that the Eucharist is received into the soul, foul with the filth of sins?" What did God wish to indicate when he ordered the loaves of propitiation to be made of the whitest flour, to be placed on the purest of tables and the most fragrant incense to be burnt before them? Was it not because those loaves were a type of the Eucharist, as Sts. Jerome, Cyril and Damascene declare? "Thou shalt set over against the table the candlestick" (Exod. 26: 35). The lights were to be of the purest oil and the candlestick the cleanest. Should he not be the purest and free from all stain who wishes to place that heavenly bread in his heart? Why was it that the Manna fell only in the early morning while the earth was covered, as it were, with a white cloth? Moreover, he should be pure who wishes to be intimately joined to the most pure Son of the Virgin. Note that after Christ had instituted the Eucharist he chose clean receptacles for his body. The dining-room in which the Eucharist was instituted was furnished. The winding-sheet was clean; the sepulcher was new, and no one had been placed in it before. What is the mystery in all this? Christ indicated that after that time he wished to dwell among faithful friends who would receive him with honor and in a pure heart. Let it be enough for us to know that that immaculate Lamb was born in a stable, nourished in a poor dwelling, clothed in poor garments; that he often slept on the hard ground, that he was thrown into a foul prison, that he was crucified on Calvary; now is the time to receive him in a more magnificent place; such is the soul pure and free from all contagion of sin. Let there be no one

who will not cast aside his garment, the old man and the desires of the flesh.

II. And they went forth to meet him. Those who anxiously expect a friend are accustomed to go to meet him. This we shall do, if with great desire and spiritual hunger we approach Christ's banquet; for by this we shall show our great love for him and shall dine with him with greater pleasure and profit. But how shall we excite this hunger, this desire in ourselves? Surely if we consider who and how great Christ is who comes to us and how much we need his presence. The Samaritan woman, when she knew Christ and tasted a little of the living water, leaving the well, ran to the city and urged all to go and see him. But the same Lord comes to us in the Eucharist bringing with him living water flowing to life eternal. Oh, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that comes to us, you would run to the city of your heart and exhort all your powers to go and meet your Lord. With what desire does a poor, desolate spouse await her rich beloved one returning with precious gifts from a far off country! But your soul is such a miserable and deserted spouse when deprived of Christ. Will she not therefore rejoice when she learns the beloved one is coming? We know that Christ with the greatest desire prepared the table of the Eucharist for us: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you" (Luke 22:15). Let us not be slower to receive than he was to give. Let us consider on the one hand the diseases and miseries of our souls, on the other the excellency and efficacy of the medicine which Christ gives us in Holy Communion. The Eucharist is a kind of hospital where all the diseases can be healed; the deaf will hear: *be thou opened;* the lame: *walk;* the blind: *behold*; the lepers: *be cleansed;* the dead: *rise,* if, however, we frequently and in the proper spirit approach it. The Lord erected it at the greatest expense, namely, his precious blood. Will he not be offended if we though afflicted do not frequent it, or unwillingly approach it?

III. "And they cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way," a mark of veneration lest he should walk on the bare earth. We also shall do this if with fear and reverence we approach Holy Communion. That consists, first, in a modest composition of the body; if before Christ we fall on our knees, cast our eyes down and remain in a position of humble adoration. For thus the boughs of trees,

that is, the pride of man, we shall cut down and strew it before Christ, thus we shall decorate the earth with the leaves of our body. Kings and queens took off their crowns and prostrated themselves in the presence of the Holy Eucharist. Was it wonderful that they should do so before the King of heaven and earth? The lowest angel in heaven is by far nobler than all the kings of earth. "And one of the Seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar. And he touched my mouth" (Isaias 6 : 6, 7). Surely not because he would burn his hand (flesh only can be burnt, not spirit), but because that live coal was a type of the Eucharist as St. John Damascene when he says: "Coal is not simple wood, but united to fire; so the bread of Communion is not simple bread, but united to the divinity." Since, therefore, one of the highest angels treated with such reverence a type and shadow of the Eucharist, consider what honor should be shown to the Eucharist itself.

Secondly, it consists in a reverential fear lest perchance anything should be found in us which would offend the eyes of the divine majesty. For we know that Oza suddenly fell dead because he had touched the Ark irreverently, although his intention was good, namely, of supporting it, "because the oxen kicked and made it lean aside" (2 Kings 6 : 6). We know that God slew the Bethsamites by the thousand because they had looked on this same ark with curiosity (1 Kings 6 : 19). Besides, the high priest groaning and with a heavy heart was accustomed to enter the Holy of holies, fearing lest, on account of some hidden sin, he might be killed by God. In the same manner our priests, about to approach the altar, pray: "Take away from us, we beseech thee, Lord, all our iniquities; that with pure minds we may merit to enter into the Holy of holies." All these show us with what fear and reverence it behooves us to appear in the presence of Christ our Lord.

IV. The whole city was moved at the coming of Christ, saying: Who is this? This shall be the case with us if we consider the majesty of the coming Lord and our own lowliness. For who is he that comes? He it is before whom "the pillars of heaven tremble" (Job 26 : 11). "Whom the morning stars praised together and whose beauty the sun and moon admire" (Job 38). "For the whole world before thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the

morning dew" (Wisdom 11 : 23). And who are we? We are a shadow, dust, nothing. Will we not therefore exclaim with the humble Francis: "My God and my all, who art thou, and who am I? And with the humble Baptist although the greatest among those born of woman: "And you come to me? I need to come to you." And with the humble Miphiboseth who when he heard from David: "Thou shalt eat bread at my table always," said: Who am I thy servant that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" (2 Kings 9 : 7, 8). How much greater is our Lord than his servant David? how much more precious than his table? Let us imitate St. Jerome who, when about to receive the Eucharist for the last time, ordered that he should be taken from his bed and placed on the ground; then kneeling erect, he struck his breast several times, exclaiming: "Thou art my Lord and my God." It is related that even Henry VIII., King of England, though cut off from the Church, had the greatest affection and reverence for the Holy Eucharist, for shortly before his death he said: "If I were to cast myself not only on the earth but even under the earth I would not seem to give sufficient honor to this Holy Sacrament."

V. They sounded the praises of Christ and cried out: "Hosanna; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In like manner after Holy Communion, thanks should be given to God for this heavenly benefit. We said before that the High Priest of the Hebrews was accustomed to enter the sanctuary (only once a year) in fear and trembling; after the service he ordered a banquet to be given his friends in thanksgiving, for his safe return from the Holy of holies. Let us order a like banquet after Communion and let us invite all the powers of our body and soul to give thanks to God and say with St. Monica: "My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." And first let us invite our intellect by acknowledging and pondering the gift received, and saying with the Israelites: What is this? what kind of manna? what kind of bread? whence has it been sent to us? by whose hands was it made? Or with Daniel: "Thou hast remembered me, O God; who hast fed me with milk, with a wonderful gruel." Or with Paul the Hermit: "Behold, the Lord has sent us a dinner, truly pious, truly merciful! What thanks would we give, if like those, we received bread from heaven, from an angel, from a

crow ? But the eucharistic bread is from heaven and from God, nay more, it is God himself. Let us then invite our memory : let us be mindful of this great benefit ; let us remember that manna ; let us inscribe on our soul : " I am the dwelling-place of the great God inaccessible to the world, the flesh and the devil." Let us invite our will by offering ourselves and all we have to the will and direction of God, so that for the future he may rule supreme in us. Let us invite the powers of the body and our senses that they may all serve Christ and admit nothing that might be offensive to our guest. What would you say if your friend, whom you traveled a long way to see, should receive you kindly indeed, but shortly after, going out the back door, leave you alone, or what is worse still should turn you out of his house ? The Jews certainly did this who in the morning with loud acclaim received Christ ; in the evening deserted him and after five days put him to death. What benefit was it to them to have led him through the city with all honor and pomp, since afterwards they crucified him on Calvary ? What benefit was it to them to have cut boughs from trees and spread them beneath him, since afterwards they gathered thorns and a reed with which they tortured and mocked him ? What benefit was it to them to have asked : " Who is this ?" since afterwards they cried out : " He is worthy of death ?" Therefore through love for that poor king, who during these days will come to you in the humble species of eucharistic bread, I beg of you not to imitate Juda nor the versatile Jews ; but rather the disciples and innocent children of Christ.

EASTER SUNDAY.

CHRIST THE LION IN HIS RESURRECTION.

I. With regard to the sleep of death. II. With regard to his raising himself. III. With regard to the glory of the rising one. IV. With regard to his power. V. With regard to his liberality.

"Behold the lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed" (Apoc. 5 : 5).

ALTHOUGH those four animals seen by Ezechiel—the man, the calf, the lion and the eagle—are commonly held to represent the four Evangelists; nevertheless St. Jerome and other commentators teach that they are figures of Christ the Lord. Because by man his humanity is shown; by the calf his priesthood; by the lion his kingdom, and by the eagle his divinity. Because Christ in his incarnation was man; in his passion the calf, as it is the animal of sacrifice; "for Christ our pasch is sacrificed" (1 Cor. 5 : 7); in his ascension the eagle, that flies highest of all; in his resurrection truly the lion; this the prophecy of Jacob to Juda intimates, for Christ was of the tribe of Juda: "Juda is a lion's whelp; to the prey, my son, thou art gone up: resting, thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness who shall rouse him?" (Gen. 49 : 9). Lion because he is king of heaven and earth; whelp of the lion because, according to divine nature, he is of the same divinity and majesty with the Father; according to human nature, he is less than the Father. Let us see by what reason Christ is a lion, especially in his resurrection.

I. With regard to the sleep preceding death. "Resting, thou hast couched as a lion." The lion, having broken the bones of his prey, lies down before he begins to eat; so also on the cross, Christ, having bowed his head, gave up the ghost; that is, bowing down he invited death to come, which otherwise would not dare to approach, according to Anastasius

Synaita. St. Gregory says: "Willingly he sought death." "I have slept and have taken my rest" (Ps. 3). And this is the glory of our lion who willingly and freely died. He ate the prey when he conquered hell and led our forefathers from Limbo.

Secondly, the lion sleeps in an open place; not in caves, like other wild animals, because he is fearless of all danger. So Christ laid him down to sleep in a most open place on Mount Calvary, although surrounded by his bitterest enemies; and was buried near by, fearing nothing from the Jews, because he knew they could not place any obstacle to his resurrection. They guarded the tomb with soldiers, and sealed the stone; and yet he slept securely, because his leonine power prepared the way for his resurrection; like Sampson who, bound by the Philistines, carried away the gates that in vain shut him in. "I have slept and have taken my rest, and I have risen up because the Lord hath protected me; I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me" (Ps. 3). St. Athanasius says: "Miserable and unhappy judge; who loosed the chains of death, he will not break the seal of the tomb; who conquered hell, he will fear the guard of the monument! Strengthen the sepulcher, mark the stone, place soldiers around it! You are doing a noble work; you are placing spectators and witnesses of the resurrection; you are preparing preaching ministers of my miracles."

Thirdly, even when the lion sleeps, he is terrible; so Christ was terrible to the Jews. Who ever saw a dead man wage war on those who surrounded his tomb, and send fear into them? Great was the fear that the Infant Jesus lying in a manger aroused in Herod, who thought he was to lose his kingdom; but still greater when lying in the tomb, he deprived death and the demons of their power.

Fourthly, the lion sleeps with his eyes open. So Christ, in death, had the eye of his divinity open; for there remained the union of the Word with soul and body, though they were separated. Hence, he calls his death a sleep only—"I have slept and have taken my rest." Christ, in his death, knew what he would do, how long he would sleep and when he would rise.

II. His most powerful raising of himself from the dead. The lion is most powerful. Christ, by the power of his divinity, conquered all, even death itself. It is a fact related by Rufinus, Eucherius and others, that when the lion's young

is whelped, he sleeps for three days and nights and then at the roar of the parent awakes from his trembling couch. So Christ, after he had slept for three days in the tomb, at the voice or power of his Father, arose not without a great commotion of the earth. But that same power was Christ's, for he possessed it with the Father, and by it he raised himself. Hence Jacob, in his blessing of Juda, speaking of Christ, says: "Resting, thou hast couched as a lion, who will arouse him?" That is, he does not need any one to arouse him—for he himself as God has aroused him. St. Ambrose says: "Who else will arouse him but himself by his own power and that of the Father? I see him born by his own will, dying by his own will. What other aid does he need to rise from the dead? He himself is the author of his resurrection." St. Augustine says: "No man raised him as did some of the prophets or he himself did others; but as though from sleep he rose."

St. Bernard says: "Who else ever raised himself from the dead? Eliseus, the prophet, raised one, but not himself. How many years now is he in the tomb? We say of others: they *have been raised* from the dead; of Christ: he *arose* from the dead. So indeed 'the lion of the tribe of Juda has conquered.'"

III. Glory and nobility of the resurrection. According to Pliny, the nobility of the lion appears when his neck is covered by his magnificent mane. So the majesty of Christ shone especially in his resurrection; for then, clothed in the garments of immortality, he showed himself the noble "lion of the tribe of Juda." When Sampson's hair was restored to him he was more powerful and more beautiful than before.

And truly was the prophecy of Aggæus fulfilled: "Great shall be the glory of this last house, more than of the first, saith the Lord of hosts." For Christ rebuilt in three days the temple of his body destroyed by the Jews, and adorned it with a glory far surpassing what it formerly had. Great was the glory of Christ in Bethlehem when he was adored by angels and kings of the East; but there also were poverty, contempt and infirmity, because an infant he was lying in a manger; but in his resurrection there was glory without contempt, power without weakness, riches without alloy. Great was his glory on Tabor, but there he showed only one of the gifts of glorified bodies—brightness; he did not show agility, subtility, impassibility. Then that brightness was visible for

a short time only. Finally, there his words were of death. In the resurrection, Christ received all the gifts and retained them constantly. Great was his glory when he walked on the waters, commanded the winds and waves ; when he cast out devils, cured the sick, multiplied the loaves and fishes ; raised the dead ; but all these he did in the form of a servant :—he hungered and thirsted and was weary. Greater was the glory of his second house, when he rose from the dead and ascended glorious to heaven. Great was his glory on the cross, when man and the elements bore testimony to his divinity ; but there was grief, ignominy, deformity, death. None of these in the resurrection. Hence Aggæus says : "In this place I will give peace." The glory of the first temple was not without poverty, contempt, weakness, fear, labor, grief, etc.; but the glory of the second temple excludes all these. How great is this glory, this happiness, to live without fear of death, without danger, without defect ! To have a body more splendid than the sun, stronger than iron, more agile than the wind ; entirely impassible and spiritual, that is, entirely subject to the spirit. Compare the glory of the resurrection with the ignominy of the cross. What a difference ! Behold him there patient, covered with blood, pierced with wounds, between two thieves. In the resurrection, behold him impassible, glittering like gold, agile, subtle, attended by angels and patriarchs and prophets. Truly the winter is passed, and the flowers have appeared in our land. Truly now Christ could say with Joseph exalted :— "God has made me forget all my labors." Such is the happy end of a just life. They are tried here like Sampson and deprived of strength ; but wait till the hairs grow, wait for the day of resurrection ; then they shall conquer and shall say : "God has made me forget all my labors."

IV. As to power over earth—for the lion is king of animals and subjects them to his will by his roar, even by his look. So Christ after his resurrection, by the appearance of an angel, by an earthquake shock, terrified the guards ; then by the preaching of his apostles as by the roaring of a lion ; by the fame and faith of his resurrection, he astonished the nations, held them captive and drew them to his worship ; and this is what Habacuc had foretold : "Horns are in his hands, there is his strength hid. Death shall go before his feet. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and melted the nations. And the ancient mountains were

crushed to pieces; the hills of the world were bowed down by the journeys of his eternity." This is as St. Jerome interprets: The Saviour, standing and beholding all and measuring the world, scattered the multitude of nations; and, being scattered, the mountains and hills of this world were crushed, that is, the princes of this world who before stood stiff-necked—crushed by the journeys of his eternity, that is, by his resurrection to immortal glory. The Jews were the first to be frightened by his voice, but unhappily and without avail, because they did not profit by it; but rather sought means to hide the glorious resurrection of Christ, by bribing the soldier-guards to say that Christ was stolen by his disciples while they were asleep. But it otherwise happened, for the guards gave testimony of the resurrection. Other nations more fortunately listened to this voice and became subjects in the kingdom of Christ. But there is a great difference between the lion and Christ. The lion terrifies animals to devour them—Christ terrifies people to save them and give them life. Wherefore the government of this king is not tyrannical, but paternal. Christ does not destroy sinners, but rather wishes to make them his friends and chosen ones.

V. Liberality and munificence. The lion, according to Solinus, is of such a generous nature, that he leaves part of his prey to the other animals. So Christ communicates to us the prey—glory and immortality—which he has captured, to be given in his own time. We have an example of this in the honeycomb found by Sampson in the mouth of the lion he had killed; "and not only himself ate, but he gave to his parents and they did eat" (Judges 14). The lion is the dead Christ from whose mouth afterwards came that sweetest of honeycombs: "Peace be to you" and "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, etc"; finally the honeycomb of resurrection and glory. Christ after the resurrection ate the honeycomb with his disciples, and gave the remains to them (Luke 24)? Tertullian says: "the confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead." If the heart of the husbandman is filled with hope, when he sees the seed, he planted, living and flourishing, and looking to a great harvest; why should not we live in the hope of that glory whose seed we have in the resurrection of Christ? If we have risen with Christ, let us put on Christ; and be conformed to him here that we may live with him hereafter.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

THREEFOLD PEACE.

I. Peace with God. II. Peace with our neighbor. III. Peace with ourselves.

'Peace be to you" (John 20: 19).

THE holy patriarch Jacob has pictured to us Christ rising in the form of a lion (Gen. 49). This, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory and other Fathers believe Jacob had in mind; and John, in Apoc. 5, confirms this when speaking of the risen Christ: "The lion of the tribe of Juda has conquered." Who would not expect from this lion, returning to life, a terrible roar, which would strike fear into all, especially the Jews, his bitter enemies, and then his disciples who fled from him? But it is not the roar of the lion that we hear; but the bleating of the lamb proclaiming peace, not war, "Peace be to you." We hear the voice of that Dove who, after the severe winter of his passion, announces the most joyful spring of peace. We saw that dove leaving the Ark and returning after the deluge of Passion Sunday, bearing in his mouth the olive-branch, symbol of peace, to his disciples almost distracted at the absence of their master, in that same house as though enclosed in the Ark, and who were then assured that the waters of the deluge had ceased; that the tempest which overwhelmed Christ had passed; that grief had departed, and on the contrary, the sweetest tranquillity had covered the face of the earth. Christ had been afflicted with many injuries, not only by the Jews, but also by his disciples; however, he does not come with the roar of a lion, nor with the sword in his mouth threatening dire vengeance; but with peace and love—"Peace be to you." He does not declare war against his enemies who condemned him to

death, and crucified him on the infamous gibbet of the cross; but declares peace, and wishes peace to all; and that he brings to us in many ways. Three times in to-day's gospel, Christ repeats that salutation—"Peace be to you;" and not without cause, for a threefold peace is necessary for our salvation.

I. The first peace is with God, which Christ, by the merits of his passion, established between God and the human race, in the shedding of his blood; and as by sin the human race rebelled against God and incurred his anger; so by the shedding of blood alone was he to be appeased. This great benefit is often brought to our minds by the apostle in Ephes. 2, Coloss. 1 and 2, 1 Cor. 5. We are reconciled to God through the blood of Christ. The rainbow, which God gave as a sign of treaty between himself and man, was a type of that peace. "The rainbow," says Lipomanus, "signifies Christ who is the sign of our redemption, given us by God the Father. He himself is our peace, our constituted advocate with his Father in heaven; with God the Father when he considers the bleeding wounds of his Son; with us when as suppliants in faith we implore his mercy." "I will establish my covenant with you" (Gen. 9:9). Rupert writes: "What kind of a covenant is this which is promised by God? for *I will* signifies future, and a covenant is not usually made without being given and accepted." A covenant indeed is often promised but only once entered into, as the Incarnation or Passion. By such a covenant the enmities existing between God and man are destroyed. In the covenant spoken of there is an establishment of peace, by reason of being given and accepted, while God, with the accepted faith of man, gives Christ his Son that we may be saved. Hence, the rainbow is called peace. Christ in a measure showed this to his disciples when, after proclaiming peace, he showed them his hands and feet and the marks of his wounds, as if to say: "Do not fear; behold this rainbow by which peace is established between you and God." When Christ was born the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will." At that time, peace was universal, for the temple of Janus was closed by Augustus, which happened only in time of peace, for in time of war it was open. At the coming of the eagle, the king of birds, all other birds fold their wings and rest in peace, not daring to fight; so on the coming from heaven of that divine eagle,

Christ our God, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the kings of earth are silent because he has appeared who is true peace, of whom the apostle says: "He is our peace who has made both one." Isaias calls him the Prince of peace because, coming from heaven, he illumined the earth, quieted the perturbed souls of mortals and filled them in a wonderful manner with the spirit of peace. This peace brought to us by Christ was first given to us in Baptism, and is again given to us in Penance, when after that peace is violated, we are finally received into grace. But this peace brought by Christ into the world must be so guarded by us, that in the future we must not offend God by sin. Isaias says: "And they will convert their swords into plough-shares, and their lances into scythes." What are swords and lances, but our senses and members with which as with arms of the devil we have fought against God. These, therefore, after reconciliation must be turned into arms of justice for the cultivating the field of our soul and the Church; so that it may serve God with those members with which before we served the devil (Rom. 6).

II. The second peace is with our neighbor, but with a threefold difference. The first consists in fraternal charity and in the union of souls, according to Ezech. 40, John 13, Acts 4, Isaias 32, 40. Hence Christ so often recommends fraternal charity to us, especially in his sermon at the last supper: "My peace I leave you, my peace I give you;" and Mark 9.: "Have peace among yourselves." For the Lord knew that we would be unconquerable as long as we preserved peace and concord; so long was the Ark of Noe safe and sound, as long as those within were at peace, and all of one mind. For if the animals in the Ark fought among themselves or with the men, they would have destroyed both themselves and the Ark. A community or kingdom will stand as long as there is harmony; but it will fall as soon as discord creeps in and divides it into parts. For this reason, peace was held in high esteem by the nations of the earth; and Tiberius had a temple of peace erected in Rome wherein all having hatred should offer sacrifice and become reconciled. Not far from this on the Palatine hill, a most magnificent temple of peace, the ruins of which may be seen to-day, was erected by Vespasian. It is related that Pomponius Atticus, sixty-seven years old, at the funeral of his mother, ninety years old, boasted that he was never reconciled to her, because

he had never offended her. If such was the spirit among pagans what should be the spirit among Christians? We should preserve peace, not only with our friends and relatives, but with strangers and enemies, in fact with all; peace not of nature but of grace; not of Gentiles but of Christ, if we wish to observe the precept of Christ.

The second consists in religion and its unanimous agreement. Such was the peace of the first Christians, believing and feeling the same thing, and is to-day that of all Catholics, (1 Cor. 1). Unless the Ark were made water-tight, it could not have withstood the force of the deluge; nor could the Church have withstood the incursions of heretics if it were not endowed with this unity. By means of this unity, it has grown to be the most powerful of nations, and is spread over the whole earth. Material Rome from a humble hamlet became the ruler of the world; but, owing to discord, it has returned to its pristine lowliness. Spiritual Rome, the Church of Rome, from the crib at Bethlehem has become the queen of nations, and her empire will stand on account of her unity of faith, and because all her members are united in one head. There are in the Church different states and different orders of Religious, but these all agree in faith and charity, all believe the same thing. As in a clock there are many wheels, some large, some small; some move quickly, some slowly; all, however, complete their course, and in a wonderful manner conspire to announce the hours of the day; so in the Church, the orders and states, though they differ among themselves with regard to some things, agree in harmony of faith.

III. Peace with man himself and that is twofold. The first is found in a tranquil and healthful conscience, although it is grieved by the world, the flesh and the devil. That victory is sufficient which often consists in patience and constant toleration of temptations and adversities, rather than in the exclusion of them. And this is the peace which the apostle so often recommends to us in his Epistles (Rom. 5, Philip. 4). He begins all his Epistles to the faithful, saluting them: "Grace be with you and peace from God the Father," etc. In this way Christ orders all houses to be saluted (Matt. 10). It is a tranquillity and serenity of mind, and the courage of a good conscience (arising not from a certitude of divine faith, by which one believes his sins forgiven; but from conjectures which make a moral certitude

that he is constituted in the grace of God) when one, after pardon of sin is received in Baptism or Penance, is not troubled in mind nor gnawed by the worm of any sin whatever. This indeed is the only good according to St. Tiburtius, who says: "Punishment is of no account to us, where a pure conscience is our companion. And in the Apocalypse it is said that it surpasses all reason, that is, it cannot be understood how great it is. Only he knows it who possesses this peace; it is that hidden manna which no one knows but him who receives it (Apoc. 2); or to speak more correctly, it is a foretaste of that heavenly manna on which the blessed in heaven feed. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17); justice, because it is order, symmetry, judgment and the harmony of the powers in man, such as can be had in this life, so that the reason commands, the body obeys and the passions are brought into moderation by the ruling of virtues; peace, because it is a serenity and tranquillity of conscience unobscured by any cloud of grievous sin; joy, because "a secure mind is like a continual feast" (Prov. 15:15). This kingdom we daily seek in the Lord's prayer, that it shall come to us; for we do not ask that we be brought immediately to heaven; but that Christ, first through his grace and the peace of our heart, shall reign in us; so that finally we may reign with him in heaven. Truly this kingdom is not found in sinners, for "there is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord" (Isaias 57:21). Nor is there any justice in them, for "the wicked are like the raging sea," because they are constantly agitated by the heat of the passions, as it were, by the breath of demons; they are stimulated by a perpetual stinging of crime even in the midst of pleasures; in this way Pharao had no rest, at table or in bed, from the plagues of gnats and flies. Nor is there joy in them; but uneasiness of mind, fear of judgment and hell, yes, even fear of the law of men whom they have treated unjustly. The second consists in a complete extirpation of vice, and subjugation of the passions, so that they will not dare oppose the authority of reason; so much so that the spirit and the flesh shall agree in all things. "Such a peace, however, is not to be hoped for in this life," says St. Augustine. The peaceful are now engaged in subduing the concupiscences of the flesh, so that some time they may come into a full enjoyment of peace. This peace, God promises to

the just—"Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye who love her, for thus saith the Lord: Behold I will bring upon her, as it were, a river of peace" (Isaias 66 : 10). There, will be days of perpetual sunshine, where no tempest shall rage nor billows roar; here, continual storms and dangers beset the mariners of the sea of life. There, the beasts of our passions will be entirely subject to us as they were subject to Adam in paradise; here, they cannot be entirely tamed; but subdued only, when they break loose; they can be forced into submission, by the chains of reason and mortification, lest they inflict the serious wound of sin. It is sufficient for us to seek this peace in death, as Simeon did: "Now dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace." St. Cyprian says: "Then will that peace and tranquil quietude come to the servants of God when, free from the turmoils of this life, we seek the haven of eternal security; when we put off mortality to be clothed with immortality." "In peace, in the self-same I will sleep and I will rest" (Ps. 49). This is the prayer we offer up for all who die in the Lord: "May their souls rest in peace." He who would possess this threefold peace must seek it in Christ, the Prince of peace.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

WHAT A GOOD SHEPHERD CHRIST IS.

I. He defends his sheep. II. He leads them to good pastures. III. He seeks the erring ones. IV. He carries those found on his shoulders. V. He looks after their health and heals their maladies. VI. He gives his life for them.

"I am the good shepherd" (John 10 : 11).

It might seem to some that this saying of our Saviour smacks of self-praise—as though he were commending himself, when he says: "I am the good shepherd." But Eusebius Emisenus destroys this opinion when, in his exposition of to-day's gospel he says: "That Christ is the shepherd is authority, not self-praise—a bowing down, not an exalting of any divinity. But he is not unworthy the name shepherd, who is not ashamed to perform the duties of a shepherd." "No one is to be despised," says a Roman Emperor, "if he asserts that he is a good husbandman or a good nobleman; for by this speech he demonstrates to all that this humility of mind is to be admired."

The Son of God from his nature and essence is good, and for this reason is the only good; and in the meantime he deigns to call himself a shepherd; what wonder then if he adds *good?* "For behold," says St. Gregory, "he who not from any antecedent gift, but essentially is good, says: 'I am the good shepherd.'" In the sacred Scripture, kings and princes are often called shepherds to lower their pride; because as St. Jerome says: "The proud name of ruler is lessened by the word shepherd." St. Gregory asserts that self-praise for us is dangerous, for God it is nothing. "He who does not need praise, nor becomes higher nor greater by laudatory speech, can safely praise himself." The Greek interpretation thus refers to the words of Christ: I am that good shepherd—as one of whom the prophets foretold—a shepherd who was to come some time, who was to feed his own sheep and not strange ones.

"Behold the Lord God shall come with strength. . . . He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather together the lambs with his arm and shall take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young" (Isaias 40). "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David" (Ezech. 34:23); that is, Christ the son of David, for David was already dead, remarks St. Ambrose. Therefore, I understand that Christ wished to say that he was the great and good shepherd, the head and model of all shepherds, who was foretold in the Scripture that he might strengthen the faith of the incredulous in his mission. For what reason is Christ called the good shepherd?

I. The good shepherd defends his sheep against wolves, dogs and wild beasts, and for this reason he always follows them into the pasture to protect them from harm. David was such a shepherd, who if wild beasts by chance stole one of his flock, pursued them and snatched the prey from their jaws and killed them. The same in a higher degree may be said of Christ, the prince of shepherds, who protects his Church. For as God formerly protected the Synagogue, will not Christ for a greater reason protect his Church? "Like as the lion roareth, and the lion's whelp upon the prey, and when a multitude of shepherds shall come against him, he will not fear at their voice, nor be afraid of their multitude: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight on Mount Sion, and upon the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem" (Isaias 31:4, 5). In the first simile strength is shown; in the second the piety and clemency of divine protection. St. Jerome says: If the lion and the whelp of the lion, going about, sees a flock of sheep, no shepherd can terrify him, and even a multitude of them he despises, being conscious of his own strength; so the Lord will fight on Mount Sion against all his adversaries. As birds, to defend their young, hover about the nest, and if they see a serpent or men or strange birds, forgetful of their weakness, they fight to the death giving vent to their grief in the shrillest notes, so will the Lord protect and save Jerusalem. And so Christ defends his Church with far greater zeal than he did formerly the Synagogue. This we see in the martyrdom of St. Stephen, when crushed by a shower of stones, Christ in all his glory showed himself to him, urging and animating him to fight on to victory and

eternal glory. Afterwards he defended his little flock at Damascus against the wolf Saul on his way to harass the faithful and bring back the conquered. Like the screech of the bird defending her young was the voice in the heavens: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" As the eagle, when leaving the nest, always keeps his eye on it to defend it against the enemy; so Christ the Lord always looks with a vigilant eye towards that nest, the Church, to guard it against ravenous wolves. The Lord showed this care while yet in the flesh, when on Mount Olivet the storm was threatening him and his disciples; and as he was about to pray to his Father, he was separated from them, not willingly, but by some force; but no farther than a stone's throw, so that he could readily come to their assistance. We read in Genesis how Agar the bondwoman, having cast her boy under one of the trees, "went her way, and sat over against him a great way off, as far as a bow can carry, for she said: I will not see the boy die; and sitting over against she lifted up her voice and wept" (21 : 16). Much more does Christ love his own than even parents love their children. And while his disciples were asleep, he was watching and returned often to see them. Is he not indeed the good shepherd?

II. The good shepherd leads his sheep to rich pastures. That Christ would do this was foretold by Ezechiel when, speaking of his office and mission, he says: "I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and their pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel; there shall they rest on the high grass and be fed in fat pastures in the mountains of Israel" (34 : 14). "I will feed them in the mountains of Israel by the rivers and in all the habitations of the land." The pastures on the mountains are the contemplations and exercises of anchorites and religious, who repose in them and grow fat in spirit, and with great pleasure play as sheep on the green grass. The pastures in the valleys by the rivers are: first, the preaching of the word of God propounded to all. In this the Lord wishes to preserve the industry of all good shepherds. Vincentius says: "The good shepherd in the heat of summer feeds his sheep, not towards the sun, lest their weak heads might be affected, but away from it; so it pleased Christ that his sheep should learn the law from the mouth of his priests; nor should they pry into the sacred Scriptures and sacred mysteries, which they do not understand; if they did so, it would be at their peril on account

of their weakened and obscure intellect. For the Scripture is as a strong wine, which must be taken in small quantities, and by the strong only, not by children, that is, the uneducated. It is like a medicine-chest containing many medicines, some salutary, others harmful, and therefore must not be partaken of by all alike.

Secondly, the pastures are the Sacraments, especially Holy Eucharist, of which Isaias foretold in a special manner (30 : 23, 24): "The lamb in that day shall feed at large in thy possession : and thy oxen, and the ass-colts that till the ground, shall eat mingled provender as it was winnowed on the floor ;" that is, corn and wine mixed and well prepared. This food of the faithful is the Eucharist, which contains that most delicious mixture of the divinity and humanity of Christ under the species of bread and wine ; and effects in their souls a wonderful mingling with the body of Christ, as they are incorporated and converted into him. What magnanimity of this shepherd ! How great his love for his sheep, that he gives them himself for their food ! "Who is the shepherd ?" asks St. Chrysostom, "that feeds his sheep with his own blood ? Only Christ, the Shepherd of shepherds."

Thirdly, the pastures are the examples of the saints, which he provides for us, which he has ordered to be written, and which show in their pictures and images, their lives and conversation. Shepherds are accustomed to offer rock-salt to their sheep, to whet their appetites and to induce them to return to the fold. What else are the saints of whom the Lord said : "You are the salt of the earth ?" Who does not know of these rocks of salt throughout the universal Church, even in our own times ? How many monasteries and houses of religious ! Every town and hamlet has its pious and learned shepherds, living examples to their flocks.

III. The good shepherd does not desert his erring sheep, but seeks them through highways and byways. This the Lord said of Christ by Ezechiel 34 : 11 : "I myself will seek my sheep and will visit them. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away, I will bring again." He strives by various means to recall his erring ones : First, by the still small voice of interior inspirations ; by this means God made known his will to Elias, and he is accustomed to use the same with those who readily hearken to his voice, and who do not wait to be spoken to in tones of

thunder. Such was Isaias, who says: "The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back;" this referring to Christ, who immediately acquiesced in the will, nay, the very sign of the will of his heavenly Father, and offered himself for the redemption of the human race, even to the death of the cross; such are the true, genuine sheep of Christ, whose lives conform to that of their shepherd, and who, wishing to serve him, freely allow their ears to be bored through at the door of the Lord, as we read in Exodus 21.

Secondly, the good shepherd seeks his erring sheep with the shepherd's crook, of which we read in Psalm 22: "Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me;" the former indicates lighter, the latter graver thought; and by both the sheep are consoled, because by chastisement they return to the shepherd; so that on this account Isaias gives thanks to God, saying: "I will give thanks to thee, O Lord, for thou wast angry with me: thy wrath is turned away, and thou hast comforted me" (12: 1). Then, indeed, is there full cause for grief and lamentation when God does not chide the erring one, but allows him to continue in his evil ways. Isaias 11 says of Christ: "He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth." Who does not know how gently and paternally Christ chides sinners? When did he ever wound or kill one? Does he not in almost every admonition use the words *do not*—do not do this or that evil? And if he chides, does he not do it to heal?

Thirdly, by means of preachers—his sheep-dogs—whom he threatens with punishment if they also do not call the erring ones to return to the fold. "I myself will come upon the shepherds. I will require my flock at their hand, and I will cause them to cease from feeding the flocks any more; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more" (Ezech. 34).

Fourthly, by example, by which he goes before his sheep in whatever is difficult. Christ never said to his disciples: Go before me—but: "Come after me, and follow me." And, again: "Can you drink of the chalice of which I will drink?" Where is the soldier who does not cheerfully follow his leader? Certainly the sheep follow their shepherd without fear, because they know that under his leadership they are safe. Such a sheep was Jeremias 17: "And I am not troubled following thee, for my pastor and I have not

desired the day of man;" that is, the day of pleasure sought after by the children of the world.

The good shepherd does not afflict nor punish the sheep found, but rather places her on his shoulder and carries her home back to the fold. Christ says this of himself: "And when he has found the sheep, rejoicing he places her on his shoulders." St. Ambrose says: "The shoulders of Christ are the arms of the cross, where all sins may find a resting-place." This was the favorite image on the walls of the Catacombs: the good shepherd, with the sheep on his shoulders. Isaias foretold this: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and take them up in his bosom, and he himself shall carry them that are with young" (40). Christ did this when he bore all our sins in bearing the weight of the cross. David cried out: "I have erred like a sheep that is lost;" and Nathan, seeing his contrition, said to him: "The Lord has taken away thy sin." He transferred it from the shoulders of David to the shoulders of Christ, the Redeemer. When sinners sought and found return to Christ, he joyfully receives them and clothes them anew with his graces and favors, as did the father of the prodigal son. He received at his table even publicans and sinners. He received Thomas, who would not believe; and why did he receive him? Because he was as yet a lamb, tender and weak and just beginning to return to the fold. Magdalene the saint he would not allow to touch him at the tomb; while he had allowed Magdalene the sinner to wash his feet with her tears and anoint him with precious ointment. He ordered her to announce his resurrection to Peter especially, because Peter was as yet weak after his fall, and he wished to encourage him. Consoling thought for the poor sinner! "Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of him who dieth, saith the Lord God, return ye and live" (Ezech. 18: 31, 32).

V. The good shepherd looks after the health of his sheep, and heals their infirmities. Christ the shepherd of all will do the same, as Ezechiel foretold: "I will bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve: and I will feed them in judgment" (34: 16). How truly does this apply to Christ, who, while on earth, healed so many bodily infirmities; and what shall we say of spiritual infirmities healed by means of the Sacraments? Nor is he like other

doctors, who often are unable to cure their patients ; nor does he look for a fee, but rather gives a reward to those he heals. "I will feed them in judgment," that is, eternal life. Those sheep that should grow, and are with young, are led to dry pastures on the mountains ; while those destined for the slaughter are fed in the rich fields of the valleys. Christ acts in a like manner, for he has sheep of two kinds ; those that are such in name and deed ; others called sheep, but in reality goats ; the former are the chosen ones, the latter the doomed. Ezechiel says : "I will judge between flocks and flocks, of rams and of goats." But where ? First, in this life, where the sheep and the rams feed on tribulations, according to Isaias 30 : "I will give you short water and bread," that is, the bread of tribulation and the water of bitterness ; the goats, however, he fattens with earthly delights of this world, that they may at least enjoy themselves here, since they are unwilling to enjoy themselves hereafter.

VI. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep : by exposing himself to danger, to preserve their life ; by heat and cold, rain and storm, he saps his strength, and courts premature death. Christ freely died for all, expecting no reward. Other shepherds expect meat and wool from their sheep ; Christ could not expect anything from us, since we could give nothing. St. Bernard says : "Christ sustained our sins in his assumed flesh and this not on his own account, but on ours, to render us strong from weak, friends from strangers, free from slaves.

Since, therefore, Christ was and is to-day the good shepherd, let us see that we are his good sheep.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

SEVEN LITTLE THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED.

I. The little while of time. II. The little service we give to God. III. The little or brief life given to us. IV. The little good we have done. V. The little number of the elect. VI. The little that is required for our damnation. VII. The little that is required for eternal happiness.

"What is this that he saith, A little while?" (John 16 : 18).

It was a common opinion of old, that the frequent repetition of the same sound by the birds of the air was an omen of future tranquillity. Putting aside this tradition, we can safely say that the frequent repetition in to-day's gospel of the word *little*—four times by our Lord and three times by his disciples—is not without some important signification. It certainly has much to do with the affair of our salvation. Following the example of the disciples we can ask: "What is this, they, Christ and his Apostles, say to us, A little while?" The repetition of this word is nothing else than, after the tempest of Passion Sunday, an omen of future tranquillity and joy, according to the words of Christ: "And you shall see me; and your sorrow shall be turned into joy." These seven *littles* give us ample food for reflection on the seven days of the week, since they stimulate us to the right ordering of our lives and bring to us tranquillity of mind. Four of these refer to the present; the remaining three to the future.

I. A little while of time. "For what is your life? It is

a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away" (James 4:15). Consider the time of your past life, how quickly it has vanished! Before you have done anything, evening comes, and your schemes are at an end; you have scarcely begun to put your thoughts into execution, when all is over. The future is not less slow than the past. Therefore, if in the past, you have accomplished so little, do you not fear that the same will be said of the future? At the first halt on his journey, Tobias rested by the river Tiger, which, according to St. Isidore, took its name from the animal on account of the swiftness of its current; "and he went forth to bathe his feet" (Tob. 6). So should we learn to look on life which goes quickly like the river Tiger; and bathe our feet—the affections—and cleanse them from the mire of worldly love, with which they are tainted on our journey. Rivers flow into the sea and thence return to flow into it again; but not so with man, who is but "a wind that goeth and returneth not." The falcons of Norway are said to be the swiftest and most industrious birds of prey, on account of the days being so short there. Since we know that our days are short, should we not be anxious to lay up a store of good deeds? And a strange thing it is, that that falcon the devil is more earnest in preventing our salvation than we are in securing it. "Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Apoc. 12). Hence, in their agony, does he tempt men the more, and more cruelly afflicts them. Should we not during this little while of time look forward to the end, and be prepared to meet the attacks of the arch-enemy?

"And when the Philistine arose and was coming and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. And he put his hand into the scrip and took a stone and cast it with the sling, and fetching it about struck the Philistine on the forehead: and he fell on his face upon the earth" (Kings 17). So must we go forth to meet the devil and put our hand in the scrip of good works, and strike him on the forehead, that is, in the beginning, lest he strike us in death.

II. How little service during the day or the week do we render God, and how much could we do? We should at least give a tenth part of the day to the service of God; for

the same reason that a tenth part of the fruits should be given to God, should a tenth part of time be given to him. This we can do by hearing Mass, praying morning and night, before and after meals, examining our consciences once a day to see if they be stained and how we can cleanse them; to remember him daily and to seize every opportunity afforded by his creatures to praise him; to often sigh for our heavenly home, and to dwell on the thought of death and eternal gloom. But if we ask ourselves: Do we do all these things? I am afraid we must answer no. All our time we give to the comforts of the body or the pleasures of the world: sleeping, eating and drinking, walking, amusements and pleasures of all sorts. And what do we derive from all these? Hear St. Augustine on Ps. 89: "Our years shall be considered as a spider." "The spider," says he, "weaves his bowels the whole day to catch flies, but with no effect; so in the life of man, we seek possessions, we desire riches and every enjoyment, and at the same time we forget to weave the web of eternal happiness for which we have been created." Heliogabalus, the Emperor, ordered one thousand pounds of spiders to be collected for him; and it is said that he finally had ten thousand pounds saying: "Let it be known from this how great Rome was." How many to-day are hunters of spiders; who seek honors and riches which are nothing else than the web of spiders. But, you will say, I must look after myself and family, and I cannot give the time to the service of God. But listen to the decision of Solomon, who ordered the infant to be divided into two parts, and one part to be given to each woman who claimed the child. The soul, the nobler part of man, contends that the whole day should be given to the service of God; the body, the weaker part, claims that the day should be given to itself because it needs more. What is to be done? Let the child or the little while of life be divided and one part given to the soul; the other to the body. Although we can give the whole time to the soul and God if we direct all our actions to the greater glory of God.

III. What little vices have we committed this day, week, month, year? The same pride, avarice, enmity, tepidity which were in the beginning of the year, nay even for many years. "What is it that hath been? the same thing that shall be. What is it that hath been done? the same that shall be done" Solomon (1). The same may be said of the

majority of men. What do they do this year? What they did last year. What kind of men are they this year? The same that they were last year. Do you remember what that blind man saw when partially healed by our Lord? "I see men" he says, "walking like trees." And how do trees walk? Do they move from place to place? Certainly not; but when swayed by the wind, they seem to change their place; but to-morrow they will be found just where they stood to-day, because their roots are fixed in the earth. So with many men who should advance daily in virtue, and destroy one vice after another. At times they are moved by the wind of divine grace, as when they receive the Sacraments at Easter; but afterwards they are found in the same place in which they stood before, because they are tied to the earth and its affections, and their own depraved habits.

IV. What little of good deeds have you done to-day, or during the past week? What use have you made of the merits of Christ, and how much of his mercy will you receive? You will find very many days devoid of good works. Consider how little you have done to help the poor; how little you have mortified yourself with regard to food and drink; how little you have given in the way of alms! In this way, you will find how much time you have lost. If the Emperor Titus, having failed on any day to give alms, was accustomed to say: "Friends, I have lost a day;" what will you say, who have lost not only one but many days on which you neglected to do good? "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly, and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings" (2 Cor. 6 : 9). You shall receive a small measure of mercy from God, if you sow a small measure of good works. "Because of the cold, the sluggard would not plough: he shall beg therefore in the summer, and it shall not be given him" (Proverb 20 : 4). So it will be with the sluggard in the summer of the next life, who on account of a little hardship will have neglected to till the soil of his body with the plow of penance. This the foolish virgins found out to their sorrow when they had not brought oil with them, being forced to beg and then to be refused it.

V. How little is the number of the elect; as the Lord says: "Many are called but few are chosen." St. Theresa said that she saw souls falling into hell as the leaves fall from the trees in autumn. Strive daily to live like the few. Compare your life and habits with the life and habits of

others ; and if you find that you live like the majority, you have cause to fear. Do not give the excuse : I am not alone in this or that vice—others do the same ; I am not the first nor the last. "Therefore hath hell enlarged her soul and opened her mouth without any bounds "(Isaias 5 : 14); because there are many who walk on the open broad road to ruin.

VI. How little is required for damnation. One mortal sin ! For Purgatory, a vain thought, an idle word, a jocose lie. This is the teaching of all the Fathers and theologians. "Nothing defiled can enter heaven," says St. John. We must render an account of every idle word ; he who calls his brother a fool is guilty of hell-fire. Why then do we make light of little things ? If the law said that those who lie, should lose their tongues ; those who listen to the detractor, should lose their ears ; those who strike another, should suffer death ; who would not fear ? The fire of Purgatory is destined for all who commit venial sins. How anxious we should be to wash away venial sins by hearing mass frequently, using holy water, gaining indulgences—how careful and watchful lest we commit the slightest fault.

VII. How little God requires from you for the glory which he wishes to give you. Love alone, he asks, which is so easy and makes all things easy. Virtue according to its nature is much more easy than sin which is against nature. The devil asks greater struggles for damnation ; and the wicked undergo more to reach perdition than the good do to reach heaven. "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways " (Wisdom 5: 7). The way of the proud is mountainous, because honors are mountains which are not scaled without great labor. The way of the avaricious is thorny, because riches are thorns piercing from all sides ; the way of the licentious is miry, because it is defiled with foulness ; the way of the envious is dark, because envy blinds ; the way of the angry is tumultuous, because anger destroys peace ; the way of the sluggard is slow, because he holds fast to the earth. Certainly, the wicked can say : we have walked through hard ways. And what, in the end, is the reward for this journey ? the same that beasts of burden receive. At the end of their journey, their harness is taken off and they are then led into the stable. So with the wicked ; at the end of life's journey they shall be stripped of all their goods and with wounded consciences led into the stable of hell.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

HOW WILL THE WORLD BE CONVINCED OF SIN, JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT?

I. The Holy Ghost will convince the world of sin. II. Of justice. III. Of judgment.

"And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of justice and of judgment" (John 16 : 8).

I DO not doubt, my brethren, but that you are persuaded that the Holy Ghost speaks through the preachers of the Church. The holy Fathers who expound the gospel teach this, and reason itself bears testimony to it; for the very same spirit which formerly, through the mouths of the Apostles, reclaimed the world steeped in idolatry, now by preachers reprehend the same world given over to all manner of vices. But you may ask: how is it that the Holy Ghost, since he is the paraclete or consoler, continually scolds us through his teachers? Seldom we hear consoling sermons; more frequently, threatening ones. To this Job answers, when persecuted by the devil, he says: "And this may be my comfort, that afflicting me with sorrow, he spare not, nor I contradict the words of the Holy One" (6 : 10). St. Gregory, explaining this, says: "The elect desire to be chastised with paternal chastisement, and consider grief as a healing balm. As if he were to say openly: "Who spares certain ones here to chastise them hereafter; therefore let him afflict me here so that he may spare me hereafter." The vexation and torture of the devil was a consolation to Job, because it was a redemption from future and far more bitter torments. The surgeon's knife and the nauseous drug are often the messengers of joy to the afflicted patient. The Holy Ghost is your consoler, when he reproves you.

I. The Holy Ghost convinces the world of sin, that is, men given up to the world and its vanities. First, since they are Christians and sworn servants of God, having in Baptism

enrolled under his standard, in sinning they become traitors and followers of the world, the flesh and the devil. He does not convince infidels and Jews because they have not received the faith, nor those aids of grace that have been given to Christians. Baptism and Christianity, according to St. Cyprian, are nothing else than the death of crimes and the life of virtues. And what does the Christian sinner do? The crimes destroyed by Christ in Baptism, he again revives; the grace and virtues received then, he now destroys. What a dreadful imprecation was that uttered by Josue against those who would try to build up the walls of Jericho! Jericho means iniquity, and it is destroyed by the trumpets of the priests—by the preaching of the word of God—and woe to the one that shall rebuild it! Is it wonderful that the Holy Ghost should reprimand more severely than infidels, Christians who restore fallen Babylon? With greater justice he reprehends those who not only after Baptism but also after Penance so often received, and after so many promises of amendment, fall again and again into the same sins. As leprosy once cured and afterwards breaking out in a sore was more detestable so that the priest was ordered to defile such leprosy, "for the plague of leprosy is broken out in an ulcer;" so sin repeated is worse and more execrable in the sight of God. Such sinners, the Holy Ghost defiles by depriving them of his grace.

Secondly, because, after so many benefits received in preference to numberless other beings, they dare to offend God and to return evil for good; to make the gifts of God weapons to be turned against him. God is not slow with his gifts to grateful ones; on the contrary, he very often upbraids the ungrateful ones, as he did in the beginning with the Hebrew people. "I made you go out of Egypt and have brought you into the land for which I swore to your fathers . . . and you would not hear my voice" (Judges 2). We have examples also of Heli the high priest (1 Kings 2); Saul (1 Kings 15); David (2 Kings 11). Christ himself could not but remark the ingratitude of the nine lepers whom he healed, and who did not return to give thanks (Luke 17). Example also of the ungrateful servant (Matt. 21). The greater the need one is in, the greater should be his gratitude. As often as we receive the sacrament of Penance, God grants us remission of sins and his grace; and yet how ungrateful we are not to give him what we owe him! Truly David says

(Ps. 36): "The sinner shall borrow and not pay again;" that is, he shall receive many gifts from God without giving one good work in return. St. Augustine says: "How much has the sinner received, for which he gives nothing in return! He has received the form of a body, and in it a distinction of senses: eyes to see, ears to hear, a nose to smell, palate to taste, hands to grasp, feet to walk. But we have these in common with the brute creation; man has received more; a mind to understand, to receive truth, to discern between just and unjust, to desire his Creator, to praise and adore him. All this the sinner receives, but by living a bad life, he refuses to pay his Creator what he owes him, not only that, he returns evil for good; therefore let him be cast into prison, till he pay the debt."

Thirdly, because with such an easy remedy as Confession at hand, by which they could wash away their sins, they neglect it however and continue for months and years in sin and in the enmity of God; and this surely is the height of madness, and deserving of the severest punishment. Did not the Hebrews in the desert deserve to be upbraided, when bitten by serpents they had neglected to look up to the brazen serpent erected for their benefit? But sin is more poisonous than a serpent. "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent; the teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men" (Eccles. 21:2.) We have a remedy by looking up to Christ hanging on the cross for our sins; and filled with grief for our sins, we can wash them away by showing their poisonous bites to the priest. What an easy remedy! If we are bodily afflicted, how quickly we seek relief; but when the soul is sick, how slow we are to apply the healing balm! A person, having offended a friend, strives in every way to make atonement, and become reconciled; but the sinner, having offended God his best friend, instead of placating him angers him all the more. On account of this slothfulness, God seems to have upbraided Solomon who remained so long in sin unmindful of his God; and who knew that David his father, by one word "I have sinned," appeased the divine wrath (3 Kings 11). "Because thou hast done this and hast not kept my covenant, I will divide and rend thy kingdom;" that is, because you have nourished the serpent in your bosom, like so many women, so many idols, when you could have easily got rid of them, you neglected, and therefore I will rend your kingdom as the serpent of sin rends your soul.

II. He convinces the world of justice ; because, if you take away justice, the republic cannot stand ; nor the government of the whole world, when it is not found in man ; and then the anger of God begins, and it cannot be appeased till justice be restored. The Lord says of the Persians, who, in the time of Zacharias under Cyrus and again under Darius Hystaspus, had destroyed the impious Babylon : "They have quieted my spirit in the land of the North" (Zach. 6) ; that is, I was restless, until appeased by the Persians' taking summary vengeance on the Babylonian tyrants. He shall convince the world of justice, first, badly administered. This is shown in the story of Heli the priest who had not punished his sons for their grave crimes. God called four times to the boy Samuel to go to Heli and reprimand him, as though the justice of God could not rest until the guilty were punished. "Behold I do a thing in Israel : and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle. . . . For I have foretold unto him that I will judge his house forever, for iniquity, because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them" (1 Kings 3 : 11–13). He wishes to say : "I shall punish him in such a way that all ears shall tingle and tremble with fear." In the same way the Lord treated King Achab on account of having let go Benadad, the enemy of the Israelites. "Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man worthy of death, thy life shall be for his life, and thy people for his people" (3 Kings 20 : 42). The same thing happened to Saul for sparing King Agag.

Secondly, of justice entirely neglected or not administered. For this reason Absalom sought to deprive his father of his kingdom, asserting, though falsely, that no one was constituted to hear the poor, thinking that this would be a powerful argument for dethroning David (2 Kings 15). This defect is such as to fill the whole republic with lamentations, in which the Holy Ghost reproves by the mouths of widows and orphans.

Thirdly, of justice impeded, overturned, eluded by violence and power, by gifts and cunning. "Thy princes are faithless, companions of thieves ; they all love bribes, they run after rewards. They judge not for the fatherless, and the widow's cause cometh not into them" (Isaias 1 : 23). They expect no gifts nor favors from them ; so their case is put behind others or entirely rejected. And again (Isaias

10 : 1–3) : "Woe to them that make wicked laws : and when they write, write injustice : To oppress the poor in judgment, and do violence to the cause of the humble of my people : that widows might be their prey, and that they might rob the fatherless. What will you do in the day of visitation, and of the calamity which cometh from afar ? to whom will ye flee for help ?"

He convinces by means of gentiles and barbarians, who often had the highest idea of justice ; as the Areopagite judges, the most just and most severe, who by night and in darkness held court so that they might not see the accused and be moved by the sight of them. Theodoric, on hearing that the case of a poor widow was continued for three years, ordered the judges to see to it and finish it in two days ; and then had them beheaded for their unnecessary delay.

III. He shall convince the world of judgment, not foreseen nor thought of. There will be no question in that judgment of the loss of this life or of other temporal things ; but of our salvation or damnation, which is to endure for eternity. St. Gregory says : "The mercy of God is said to forget him who has forgotten his justice." Who would not blame those criminals who, being led to punishment, should go singing and dancing ; but they act thus, who forget that they are going to judgment ; who rejoice at having done evil ; and who live as though there were no future.

Secondly, of judgment so often inculcated. The laws of earthly rulers once promulgated, strike terror into the breasts of evildoers. But the decrees and judgment of God are so often announced to men yet, and yet they are so little heeded. The judgment of God is seen in the fall of so many thousands of angels for one sin only. "Thou hast caused judgment to be heard from heaven" (Ps. 75 : 9).

St. Bernard says : "What do you think ? He will indifferently admit men into that home of blessedness, in which he does not indifferently allow the angels to remain ? Or he will not discriminate between clods of earth, who has discriminated between stars ? What kind of a man should be found to enjoy the place of an expelled angel ? He inculcated it to our first parents, judged and condemned after their transgression in the garden of paradise ; afterwards in the deluge ; in the burning of the five cities ; in the opening of the earth and the swallowing of the rebellious. Finally, in Scripture, there is nothing more frequently brought to

mind, than the last judgment; and that especially among the prophets. It is our tutor in exercising piety. He who ignores this tutor will see what answer he will make to God. The walls of Jericho fell after the priests had marched around them seven times, sounding the trumpets. Not only seven times, but hundreds of times do the priests cry out everywhere and proclaim the judgment of God; and in the meantime, the hardened hearts of sinners are not softened.

Thirdly, of judgment contemned and despised, as though there will never be one. Origen says: "I fear we merit fire, not for single members, but for the whole body. When the eyes are lascivious either through illicit desires or devilish spectacles, what else do they gather for themselves but fire? When the ears are not turned away from hearing vain detractions of our neighbor; when the hands are always stained with murder and rapine; when the feet are swift to shed blood; when the body is given, not to the Lord, but to the lusts of the flesh and the world; what else is this but to give the whole body over to hell?" But when these things are proclaimed, they are received with contempt. Why? Because faith is wanting. If an earthly judge were to tell you that you had but one more day to live, what would you do? Would you not spend all you had to have powerful ones intercede for you? Would you not bend all your energies to obtaining that one thing, despising all else? If so much care be taken to defend oneself before an earthly tribunal, what shall we do before the heavenly one, where each one is to render an account of all his words, deeds and actions? Truly the "redemption of the soul of man are his riches." How can we believe or understand those things, since we pay no heed to them? The Holy Ghost foresaw that, at the end of the world, there would be men who would indulge freely their passions; who would deny a future judgment; and these he reproves by St. Peter: "In the last days, there shall come deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts, saying: where is his promise or his coming?" (2 Peter 3:3, 4). "For yet a little and a very little while, and he that is to come, will come and will not delay" (Heb. 10:3, 7). God is either just or not. If just, he has named the day on which he will render to each one according to his works.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

UTILITY AND FRUITS OF PRAYER.

I. It exhilarates the mind. II. Generates contempt of the world. III. Fortifies against the enemy. IV. Repels the devil. V. Conquers God himself. VI. Commands what it asks. VII. Always merits something.

"Ask, and you shall receive" (John 16 : 24).

We read in the book of Judith that, when Holofernes was about to lay siege to Bethulia, he went around the city and "found that a fountain which supplied the people with water ran through an aqueduct without the city on the south side : and he commanded their aqueduct to be cut off." He surely would have accomplished his purpose, were it not that God by means of his servant Judith destroyed him. In a spiritual sense, the enemy of the human race does the same thing, since he knows how much good comes to us through the celestial aqueduct, which is no other than prayer, the fountain of all God's graces ; and therefore, he strives to destroy this and divert men from praying, certain indeed that they can be easily overcome who neglect this salutary work. But what Holofernes could do by force, the devil cannot do unless we ourselves consent. How careful then we should be lest our aqueduct be cut off. If we should be forced for some reason or other to give up many good works, let us never give up the work of prayer.

I. Prayer exhilarates the mind, as St. James says : "Is any one of you sad ? let him pray" (5 : 13). St. Paul (1 Thess. 5 : 16, 17) : "Always rejoice. Pray without ceasing" ; that is, if you wish always to rejoice—always pray. "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer" (Isaias 56 : 7). The Jews joyfully went to the temple as to the house of the Lord

and there, rejoicing, prayed and sang and played all manner of instruments. Hence David (Ps. 121) says: I rejoiced in those things that were said to me, I will go into the house of the Lord. With what greater joy should we not enter our temples where really and truly God dwells in the Blessed Eucharist! We know that David danced and played before the Ark of the Covenant, though that Ark was only a figure of the Eucharist; with what consolation should we not pour forth our souls in our temples? St. Hilary says that David, while a shepherd, was accustomed to travel alone in the country, and becoming melancholy, he would take his harp and begin to sing the divine praises, and in this way cheered himself in his loneliness. "So, whenever the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed and was better for the evil spirit departed from him" (1 Kings 16). Following this example, when the spirit of sadness is on us, let us take the harp of prayer, and sing the praises of God. The reason is, that when we make known the afflictions and miseries we suffer to another, and especially to a higher judge, we are relieved and refreshed as though we had just put down a heavy burden. Much more should we be consoled when we lay bare all our miseries and afflictions before God, for he is our father-physician and judge. "Commit thy way to the Lord and trust in him, and he will do it. And he will bring forth thy justice as the light" (Ps. 36). Open your case, and place it before God in prayer, and he will find a way by which your innocence will be made known to your accusers. Such was the case with Susanna, who, when unjustly condemned, looking up to heaven, commended herself to God, "for her heart had confidence in God," who, through the instrumentality of the boy Daniel, proved her innocence and liberated her.

II. It generates contempt of worldly things. The man of prayer approaches God and speaks with him about things of the greatest moment; and having tasted of these, he begins to despise, as puerile, the things of earth. As the counsellors of a king, who are accustomed to treat with him about affairs of state, the army, war, etc., when they return home, they pay no heed to private and domestic affairs, but look on them as trifles; so those who treat with God in prayer about the important affairs that relate to God's glory and the salvation of the soul, when they turn their eyes to earth, they look on everything as void and empty. If one were to stand near

the sun and look down on the earth, he would consider it a mere dot; and if one were standing on a very high tower, he would rate men no greater than ants, and horses as little dogs; so the one given to prayer looks on earthly things as nothing. Prayer is an ascending of the mind to God, and by it God does not so much approach us as we approach him; as St. Denis the Areopagite says: "As one placed in a boat brings himself to shore, he seems to draw the shore to him, while the contrary is the case;" so the man of prayer is rather drawn to God than he draws God to himself. Hence it happens that such a one is not easily disturbed or saddened; though he receives an offense or an injury, though he sees others possessing greater goods than himself, etc., because, conscious of heavenly things, all these he despises; in like manner he does not rejoice over temporal fortune, if he is praised, if he acquires wealth, if he has costly garments, if he sees the misfortunes of his enemies, because he counts as nothing what men of earth value so highly.

III. He fortifies the wall against the dangerous incursions of the enemy. There is an example of this in Exodus 17, where it is told that, as long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, Israel was victorious; when he let them down for a moment, Amalec was victor. In like manner the priest Eliachim urged the Israelites to oppose Holofernes. The same thing happened to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus when he was fighting for his people against the tyrant. With his Deacon, he betook himself to a mountain to pray, and was followed by his enemies, who did not recognize them, but thought rather that they were two trees. Hence the Emperor Honorius did not hesitate to say: "that the Roman Empire fell or stood by the prayers of the priests." Justinian says: "The empire, the army, the fields themselves, whatever men possess, are preserved by the prayers of saints." For this end so many religious orders have been established in the Church; and there is a continual appeal ascending in prayer to the throne of God. If the prayers of others avail, how much more so our own! Judas Macchabæus was victorious as long as he prayed; as soon as he ceased, the battle went against him, and finally he was slain.

IV. Repels the devil. St. Chrysostom says: "The wicked spirits immediately retreat, if we fortify our walls by prayer; the same with thieves and robbers, when they find the sword hanging over them." One not given to prayer becomes an

easy prey to the demons who carry him off and subject him to many indignities. It is told that Julian the Apostate once sent a devil from Persia to the west to bring back some message. When he arrived at the place where Publius the Monk lived, he stood there immovable for ten days, while the monk continued to pray; and so was impeded on his journey. Having returned, and on being chided by Julian, he told him about the monk. Indignant at this, the monk was ordered to be put to death; but the unfortunate Julian himself died soon after. They say that the Thracian horses, no matter how wild, can be held and subdued by a single thread. Is not the devil a most ferocious beast? And yet he is conquered and bound by the most slender thread of prayer. In the Canticle of Canticles 4, we read: "Thy lips are as a scarlet lace" (some have it thread), clearly showing that the lips of the man of prayer are such a thread. Scaliger writes that when the chameleon, the enemy of all poisonous animals, sees a serpent, he ascends a tree, and from his mouth, like a spider, he lets down a thread, on the end of which is a drop glittering as a pearl and its touch is sure death. Prayer made in the name of Jesus has the same power against the devil according to Christ: "They shall expel demons in my name." Therefore the Church at the end of all prayers adds a pearl to the thread of prayer by the words: "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Wherefore when the infernal serpent would ensnare us, let us ascend the tree of prayer, raise our minds to God and weave such a thread. When one sees a wild beast coming, he climbs a tree; so when wicked thoughts come, fly to God by prayer and you will be saved.

V. It conquers God himself. Thus Moses by prayer held and bound God, as it were, lest he should destroy an idolatrous people. God says: "Let me alone that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation (Exod. 32 : 10). But Moses persevered in prayer and God was appeased. The same power of prayer was shown in the struggle Jacob had with the angel. He held him and would not let him go till he had blessed him. Great is the strength of that little fish, a foot long, which clings to the keel of mighty ships, and in spite of wind and wave prevents their sailing. But greater by far is the strength of prayer which restrains God from inflicting punishment. Amos writes that God once sent a

plague of locusts to destroy the crops. And when they had partly destroyed them Amos prayed: "O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee; who shall raise up Jacob, for he is a little one? The Lord had pity on this; yea this also shall not be, said the Lord God" (Amos 7 : 5, 6). See what a short prayer conquered the anger of God!

VI. It commands what it asks. For prayer is as a golden key, such as was given to the keepers of the galleries by princes, as a sign that they could open the locks at any time and approach the prince. Such a key Christ gives us when he says in to-day's gospel: "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you." What wonderful things may be obtained with this key! Moses obtained water from a rock, manna from heaven, the division of the Red Sea. Elias had, as it were, the keys of heaven; he opened it for rain, and closed it again at will. The Hebrews say that God reserves to himself four keys: the key of rain, key of generation, key of plenty to dispel famine, key of resurrection. But prayer is a sort of universal key, opening all these closed things. Elias prayed and obtained rain, and destroyed the famine; Isaac prayed for his barren wife and obtained two sons; Elias prayed and raised the dead. This key should not be used indiscreetly, lest the power be restricted; so we should be discreet in what we ask of God. "One of two things we can surely hope from God," says St. Bernard, "either he will give us what we ask, or what he judges more useful for us."

VII. A devout prayer always merits something, though it may not receive what it asks. That prayer of St. Paul was not heard when he prayed three times to have the sting of the flesh taken away from him; yet he had the merit of prayer. Whatever is not granted to one is not denied, but deferred, and is changed into a future reward. As when one promises God and his Church a certain sum of money for health, or has masses said; although he does not obtain what he asks, he does not, however, lose the merit of the work; it is stored up for him in heaven.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

HOW THE APOSTLES GAVE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST, AND HOW EACH CHRISTIAN SHOULD DO THE SAME.

I. By voice. II. By Christian conversation. III. By miracles. IV. By martyrdom. Our tyrants and persecutors are: free will; the world; the flesh; the devil.

"And you shall give testimony of me, because you are with me from the beginning" (John 15 : 27).

A GREAT dignity was conferred on the Apostles when they were called witnesses of the life and passion of Christ; and this we see in the words of the text. For what else is a witness but a defender and guardian of some cause? And what is it to be a defender of God? Hence the Apostle Peter glories in that name; not because he is an Apostle, the Prince of Apostles and head of the whole Church; but because he is a witness of Christ. "I beseech, who am myself an ancient and a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 5 : 1). St. Paul could not confer on St. Stephen, the first martyr, a more honorable title than witness of Christ, "and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed" (Acts 22 : 20). Finally, all the holy martyrs who shed their blood for Christ were called by this name, for the word martyr in Latin signifies witness. Besides, if we note well, we Christians also are understood by that name and are marked with that dignity. For if the Apostle (Heb. 12 : 1) called the ancient Fathers witnesses of Christ or martyrs, because they fought for the faith; if John calls Enoch and Elias who are to come in the time of Anti-Christ witnesses of Christ; who doubts that even we can be his witnesses, nay should be, especially those who have lately become members of the true Church?

I. By voice or preaching, as is evident from Acts 4 : 20 : "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" that is, because we have been deputed as witnesses of Christ: we must fulfil our office. And farther on (4 : 33) : "And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord." So great was their fervor in preaching the gospel, that they were said, by some, to be full of new wine ; then also they tried to convert even their judges, as St. Paul says (Acts 26 : 26); as though there were no question of his danger, but of theirs. Therefore, every Christian should believe in Christ, not only mentally, but also when occasion requires, he should confess his faith by word of mouth ; like a clock, which not only indicates the hours, but also sounds a bell. St. Ambrose wishes all Christians to recite the Creed every morning, and especially when in danger. St. Augustine and St. Jerome advise us to repeat it before beginning any work. The Apostles gave it to us not in writing but by word of mouth, to teach us to alway have it in our heart and mouth, and to recite it from memory. This should be especially observed by converts, to do away with every indication of their former belief, and in order to be looked on by the faithful as sheep and not as wolves ; they should give evidence of the sincerity of their faith by external signs ; even as St. Paul who, when newly converted, continually entered the Synagogue and preached Christ: and when having entered Jerusalem, he tried to mingle with the faithful, who did not know he had been converted, and who feared him as a wolf; he failed until introduced by Barnabas; then he defended the faith against Greek and Gentile who strove to put him to death (Acts 9). Much less is it by any means allowed to deny the faith ; what son dares, without committing a serious crime, deny his father ?

II. By the raising of two fingers, that is, by the holy conversation of a Christian life which contains two parts : flight from sin, and study of virtue, according to the Psalmist: "Depart from evil and do good." How holy was the conversation of the Apostles we learn from the Acts, where it is said that Christians lived then as religious live now. They had everything in common, were persevering daily in hearing the word of God, in communicating and in almsgiving. An institution of disciples, so good, reflects credit on their teachers as a fine work, on its originator. Hence the Apostle

does not require from the Corinthians any letter of recommendation other than their life which he had taught them. "You are our epistle" (2 Cor. 3 : 1, 2). St. Peter testifies that the Christians formed by him, on account of the sanctity of their lives, are a miracle to the Gentiles (1 : 4). When St. Blandina was being tortured for a supposed crime, she said to her tormentors: "I am a Christian, no evil is committed by us." This testimony was most efficacious in the beginning, and in a wonderful manner moved heretics to embrace the religion of Christ; for it had been foretold by Isaias (61 : 9): "These are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Seeing this in his own time, Julian the Apostate wrote to Araces the high priest of Salatia that he should conform his customs to those of the Christians, and correct those of his priests. But he labored in vain; for it belongs to divine power, not to human, to form men in holiness of life. We Christians should, therefore, imitate the Apostles in this, and by the innocence of our lives give testimony to Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that he came down from heaven as the Saviour of the world; that he snatched us from the power of darkness, and made us children of light and of God; this we should show by putting off the works of darkness, and putting on the armor of light, by avoiding evil, and doing good. "A wise woman hath sought wool and flax and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands" (Prov. 31 : 13). Wool is the outer garment, flax the inner. As no one would dare appear in public scantily clad; so no one should be content with that faith which lies hidden in the heart; it is necessary to put on the external garment and good keeping of faith. This is "to work by the counsel of the hands," namely, when the hand employs the heart. Otherwise, if our life does not correspond with the evangelical doctrine of Christ, we shall bring discredit and disgrace on Christ our teacher and guide. "Be genuine Christians" says St. Augustine, "and do not imitate those who are Christian in name, but vain in deeds. Such Christians are like a flower-bed, beautifully expressing the name Jesus, which the growing grass soon covers, and renders it impossible to distinguish the name. Beautiful indeed is the name Christian in the garden of the Church; but if vice covers it, who can read it, who will believe that you are a Christian?" Converts to the faith especially should observe this lest they consider it sufficient to have made their profession; they

must make certain of their vocation by good works. Let them not be content that they are a tree planted in the vineyard of the Lord; but let them strive to bear fruit lest with the fig-tree they be cut down.

III. By the imprint of the seal, that is, by the performing of miracles. As a seal appended to a will and other writings, so miracles prove the genuineness of the divine mission (John 6:27). The Lord says that he was sealed by the Father, that is, with the seal of miracles, by which he proved that he was sent by the Father. That the Apostles for this reason gave testimony of Christ is clearer than light. Certainly by this they convinced very many Jews and closed the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees, as had been predicted by Isaias (48:9): "for my praise I will bridle thee;" that is, by glorious miracles. But how will other Christians bear this testimony of Christ? Surely miracles are not necessary now, nor are they required of us. We can, however, perform wonderful things not unlike miracles. If those in the midst of a depraved generation, as Paul said of the first Christians, shine as lights in the world, will they not perform a great miracle? The Apostle wishes us to be such among those who as yet are not constituted in the true faith. St. Anselm says: "Christians should be as stars which are fixed in the heavens, and care not for earthly things; but intent on pursuing their course and shedding light on the world." Aristotle and Plato say that neither the morning nor evening star is as beautiful as a just man. Such a light was Job in the land of Hus, because he was good among the wicked. Such was Tobias serving God, while captive among the Assyrians. Moreover, when all went to the golden calves which Jeroboam, King of Israel, had made, he alone fled the company of all, and went to Jerusalem to the temple of the Lord" (Tob. 1:5). Such a light was Noe, when all flesh had corrupted its way. Such was Abraham among the Chaldæans; the Macchabees among the Hebrews; the Philippines and all the early Christians among the Gentiles. It certainly is wonderful for good to live among wicked people, and not become tainted with their vices. Such were St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Basil in the Academy at Athens. St. Gregory writes: "If it is believed that a river, passing through a salt sea, retains its freshness; that in a fire, everything is consumed, an animal dances; so were we among all the corrupt and depraved

youth." Those who resist many grave temptations, perform as many miracles, because they are in the fire and do not burn.

IV. By martyrdom, and this is the last and most perfect kind of testimony and the complement of the others. The holy Martyrs obtained that name because they sealed with their blood their testimony to the true faith. It is not necessary to show here that this was done by the Apostles; it is readily admitted. But how will we give such testimony of Christ? There are no tyrants now: but there are our free will, the world, the flesh and the devil, which we must often encounter. If we conquer these, we shall follow closely the first martyrs. Our first tyrant and persecutor is our own will, which we conquer by obedience. Obedience has its martyrdom, by which one breaks his head and submits to the will of another. Blessed Peter Faber, one of the first companions of St. Ignatius, was ordered to come to Rome during the intense heat, and though dissuaded by the doctors, in a spirit of obedience he obeyed, and as a result forfeited his life. Another tyrant is the world, which ensnares us by its blandishments and attacks us by its detractions. St. Augustine says: "Let us struggle against its deadly allurements, knowing that in it daily martyrdoms are not wanting to Christians." St. Gregory says: "To bear contumely, and to love those who hate us is a hidden martyrdom." The third is the flesh, which as long as we live in it opposes us. St. Cyprian says: "In vain will you give the neck to the executioner unless you destroy the members above the earth, that is, the affections that war against the spirit: anger, hatred, envy, pride, etc." Nor will the devil be found wanting in stirring up strife; he should be carefully watched and resisted by every Christian. Finally, every one should be always ready to profess his faith and defend it against its enemies so that he will not deny it nor dissimulate when questioned; let him rather suffer torments than recede one iota. There will be many things to try the patience of the newly converted. Habits long formed which are difficult to get rid of; the manner of living of certain Catholics who are not as exact as they should be; finally, the insults and threats of heretics. He should oppose these persecutors, remembering that custom is overcome by custom; that what seemed bitter at first, becomes sweet by use. Seneca says: "It is a difficult thing

for shoulders unaccustomed to it to bear a burden ; a beginner pales at the thought of a wound ; a veteran boldly beholds his blood, who knows that he has often conquered after the shedding of blood." There will always be something for man to suffer, whether he professes the true religion or not. Everywhere, crosses and miseries. A long old age ; a tender youth subject to all diseases ; it snows in the mountains ; it rains in the valleys. The Catholic Church indeed professes sanctity, but not in all her members ; she urges them to aspire to it. St. Jerome says : " No one is born without vices ; he is the best who is urged by small things." Epictetus says : " You wish to undertake the study of wisdom, prepare yourself to be laughed at. The Saints and Christ himself had their insultors ; who is not willing to bear with them ? The derisions of the world are to be spurned ; eternal goods to be desired before temporal ones. A storm proves a ship ; temptation a Christian. It is easy for a Christian to show himself such, as long as the world, the flesh and the devil do not allure him ; when there are temptations, then the true Christians, the true children of God appear. Many Christians pray, fast, go to church, to confession as long as there is no temptation ; but, when the devil offers special inducements, they soon show their true colors ; their religion is a house built on sand ; which is soon destroyed by wind and rain. Let us then, build our house on the imperishable rock of the Church, and there let us give testimony of Christ, who one day in heaven will give testimony of us.

PENTECOST.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

I. He came on the day of Pentecost and at the third hour. II. He came upon these sitting in the same house, and rested upon the Apostles. III. He came suddenly with force. IV. He came with a sound from heaven. V. He came with a mighty wind. VI. He filled the whole house. VII. He came to Jerusalem. VIII. He came in the form of tongues. IX. In the form of tongues of fire.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind" (Acts 2:2).

When a King or an Emperor with solemn pomp enters a famous city, soon some painter depicts the scene most accurately and exhibits it to those who were not present. To-day, with solemn pomp, the Holy Ghost enters the world, so that this day may be called with Joel: "the great and manifest day of the Lord." He came with great thunder, like the sound of a bombardment; he came with force and a mighty wind; he came from heaven; he came with fire; and since all these contain mysteries, St. Luke as a renowned painter depicts all that pomp for us who did not behold it with mortal eyes. Let us gaze on the picture.

I. The Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost. First, to signify that on this day the old law was changed into the new. The old law was given to the Jews on Mount Sinai on the fiftieth day after the Pasch; so on the fiftieth day the law of grace was given to Christians on Mount Sion, according to the prophecy of (Isaias 2:3): "for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the law from Jerusalem;" as though putting an end to the old law, as the reality puts

an end to the shadow and figure; for the promulgation of the old law was a type of the new. Then the mountain trembled as with an earthquake shock—now the house of the disciples; then amidst fiery flames and lurid lightning, the crash of thunder sounded—now at the sight of tongues of fire a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind comes; then the sound of the trumpet went forth—now the evangelical trumpet resounds from the mouth of the Apostles. "For you are not come to a mountain that might be touched, and a burning fire, and a whirlwind, and darkness and storm, and the sound of a trumpet . . . but you are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels. . . . See that you refuse him not that speaketh" (Hebrews 12 : 18, 22, 25). Surely that was a law of fear; this a law of love—that was written on tables of stone; this on hearts of flesh.

Secondly, to signify that from this day begins a plenary jubilee of the remission of sins in the whole world; for the number fiftieth, which the word Pentecost means, is the number of the jubilee which took place every fifty years, and in which each one could return to his original possession which had been sold to another (Levit. 25). In the same manner, on to-day on which the remission of sins begins to be preached, was begun the jubilee of Christians, by which each one could return to his original possession, that is, lost grace and glory. This is that pleasing year of the Lord which Isaias foretold of the time of grace, and which Christ himself interpreted, in which all the debts of sin began to be destroyed in the fire of the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, to indicate that on this day the harvest of Christ begins, and which the Lord said was near: "See the countries, for they are white already to harvest . . . I have sent you to reap, etc." (John 4). It was customary for the Jews to reap the harvest after Pentecost; so from this day the Apostles began to reap in the field of the Church. Fourthly, on the day of Pentecost, the first fruits were offered: "Two loaves of the first fruits, of two-tenths of flour leavened" (Levit. 23 : 17). On this same day two loaves of the first fruits, that is, two peoples began to be converted and were baptized; of two-tenths, that is, by the observance of the ten commandments by each people. He came at the third hour from the rising of the sun. First, because the Apostles and the others were then awake and watching; serious and more fit to receive and consider this

prodigy. Secondly, because that hour among the Jews was the hour of prayer. Thirdly, then was promulgated the third law; the first was the law of nature; the second, the law of Moses; the third, the law of Christ. Fourthly, because the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Trinity. For this reason the Church, at the third hour of prayer, invokes the Holy Ghost.

II. He came upon them seated together in the same house, to signify first, that the Holy Ghost is not given to any but those dwelling in the house of the Church of Christ. As the dove sent by Noe could not find any place to rest outside the Ark, neither can the Holy Ghost outside the Church. In vain therefore, do those outside the Church invoke the Holy Ghost and his grace; like those prophets of Baal whom Elias laughed at when they were calling in vain for God to send down fire to burn the holocaust. "Cry with a loud voice for he is a god, and perhaps he is talking, or is in an inn or on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened" (3 Kings 18). God was deaf to their cries; but Elias obtained immediately what he prayed for. And so, no matter how much heretics may cry out and how much they may be by their pastor, they do not receive the Holy Ghost because they are not in the house of the Church of Christ, outside of which there is no redemption nor forgiveness. Secondly, the Holy Ghost is not given to those burning with anger and hatred; but to those living in peace and harmony and brotherly love. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. . . . As the dew of Hermon which descendeth on Mount Sion. For there the Lord hath commanded blessing and life for evermore" (Ps. 132). Theodoret interprets the dew as meaning the Holy Ghost sent to Mount Sion. For dew does not fall when a storm is raging, but when everything is calm; so the Holy Ghost does not come to the angry and the wicked; he prefers the quiet and peaceful. Although Mount Hermon is divided from Mount Sion by the river Jordan, it is however the higher, and denotes heaven or Christ, from whom the Holy Ghost descends on Mount Sion, although the distance be great between Christ and the Apostles. He rested on the Apostles, first to commission them as Doctors of the earth and, in a way, to crown them. Secondly, to show that in them and their successors he will remain till the end of the world according to the promise of Christ.

III. He came suddenly and with great force. First, that the miracle of this mission should be evident. Generally before thunder becomes deafening lightning is beheld afar off, then low rumblings before the mighty crash; not so on Pentecost, for *suddenly* a sound came from heaven, not to fill all with fear and consternation, and urge them to flee; but to confirm the miracle that could not be gainsaid. This sudden sound was as the stroke of a bell which in a public necessity is instantly rung to call the people. God wished to call the people to the first sermon of the Apostles, that it was the word of God not of man that was promulgated.

Secondly, to signify that the Holy Ghost endows with fervor the believers whom he fills, so that they may do all things quickly and with despatch. "The grace of the Holy Ghost," says St. Ambrose, "does not know straggling undertakings." After they had received the Holy Ghost, the Apostles began immediately to preach to the people and to announce the law of God. Whatever one should do, let him do it quickly and promptly. At the sound of the bell go immediately to Mass; having fallen into sin go immediately to Confession; having discovered the occasions of sin, give them up immediately. He who acts thus gives evidence that he is impelled by the Holy Ghost. Thirdly, to teach us to expect the Holy Ghost at all times and prepare our souls to receive him, because he comes suddenly and without warning, when it pleases him. "The Spirit breatheth where he will; and thou hearest his voice, but thou knowest not whence he cometh" (John 3 : 8). Let the sinner not say: I will wait till Easter or Christmas to go to Confession; because it is uncertain at what time it may please the Holy Ghost to come to remit sin. Therefore the Apostles remained the whole time indoors, from the Ascension to Pentecost, expecting the Holy Ghost. The Angel who was wont to descend to stir the waters in the pool had no fixed time, and consequently the sick were always in Bethsaida awaiting the moving of the waters. Since then you do not know when the Holy Ghost will breathe, you should be always ready to receive him.

IV. He came with a sound from heaven to indicate first, that the sound of the miracles, of the sanctity of the preaching of the Apostles, was to travel throughout the whole earth, according to Ps. 18: "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth." The same thing was prefigured by the sound

of the trumpets, at which the walls of Jericho were overthrown and leveled to the ground. Origen says: "Jericho is destroyed by the trumpets of the priests; for we see the fortifications of the world—the worship of idols, the dogmas of pagan philosophers—destroyed by priestly trumpets." Christ coming sent his priests carrying the flexible trumpets of preaching. Secondly, to denote that the gospel of Christ is heavenly, for the sound came from heaven. It could have come from the bowels of the earth, but it did not, because such a sound indicates the doctrine of heretics. "And the Angel opened the bottomless pit: and the smoke of the pit arose as the smoke of a great furnace: and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts on the earth" (Apoc. 9 : 2, 3). The sound made by the motion of the earth infests the air and brings pestilence with it, as heresy brings a pestilence to souls. Not so the sound coming from heaven, which rather purifies the air; and this the sound of the Apostles has done.

V. He came with a mighty wind, to denote first, the wonderful operations of the Holy Ghost. The life of man is preserved by the respiration of air; so the life of the soul by the breathing of the Holy Ghost. As the wind purifies the air, so the Holy Ghost purifies the soul from sin. As the wind moves ships, so the Holy Ghost moves the hearts of men to good works on the road to heaven. As the wind in trumpets give forth sound, so the Holy Ghost fills the heart to speak and teach heavenly things. Secondly, it denotes that, on this day, the boat of the Church began to be launched on the deep, and to start on its voyage around the world. This little boat remained some time in the upper chamber awaiting the wind; and that having come, began most happily to navigate; for on the first day, it engaged the powerful fleet of hell, and captured three thousand pirates. Thirdly, it denotes that the Apostles, like the winds, were to traverse the earth, purge the world, destroy the idols, strengthen the failing hearts of sinners by the gospel, the message that they could become the children of God.

VI. He filled the whole house where they were seated, first, to denote the copious replenishing of the Holy Ghost granted to the church. He came to Elias in the whistling of a gentle breeze (Kings 19); to Eliphaz in a whisper (Job 4); to indicate that, in the old law, the Holy Ghost was given

very sparingly ; but, in the law of grace, he is given with great abundance and fulness. Hence the Apostles seemed to the Gentiles full of new wine (Acts 2). Truly they were filled with the new wine of the Holy Ghost. Compare the number of Saints in the new law with those in the old ; the miracles, the life and virtues of these with those, and you will see the result of the fulness of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, as the Holy Ghost filled every corner of the house, so there is no corner of the globe in which he has not poured forth most profusely. This Joel 2, foretold (as is interpreted by St. Peter in his sermon on this day), saying : "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy ; your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions. Moreover, upon my servants and handmaids, I will pour forth my Spirit." There is almost no spot on earth where the Lord has not Saints. From the royal throne to the lonely hermitage ; among the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned.

VII. He came to Jerusalem. First, because he suffered in Jerusalem and was repudiated by the Jews ; he should therefore be glorified there through his Spirit, and received by at least some of the Jews. The Holy Ghost was the glory of Christ, because he showed that he had ascended into heaven and that there he was Lord of all. Secondly, to show that having abolished Judaism, whose center was Jerusalem, he institutes Christianity. For on Pentecost, a new law was to be promulgated by the Apostles, and it was necessary that it should be publicly announced, and in such a place that it could be briefly understood by all the Jews. From that city, as from the head of the members, it could easily be disseminated throughout the cities of Judæa. For this same reason the Apostolic See was placed in Rome, the capital of the world.

VIII. He came in the form of a tongue, because the tongue is the instrument of speech and preaching. The Holy Ghost appointed the Apostles preachers of the gospel, and conferred on them the gift of tongues, the same as on the Church. Secondly, because as from the word of the mind proceeds the voice of the tongue, so the Spirit proceeds from the Son. Thirdly, because as the tongue distinguishes tastes, so the Holy Ghost causes men to discern heavenly things from earthly things ; true doctrine from false and heretical. Fourthly, to instruct Christians and to help them to curb

the tongue, which St. James calls "an inquiet evil full of deadly poison."

IX. In the shape of fiery tongues. First, to show the nature of the law of grace which is the law of charity. "In his right hand is a fiery law" (Deut. 32). Secondly, to signify the effect which the Holy Ghost was to operate in the souls of the apostles and of all the faithful; that he was to consume in them sloth, fear, concupiscence and all vices; and was to make them fervent, zealous and as it were, fiery. Thirdly, that by this fire of love and consolation of the Holy Ghost, not torturing, not scorching, but rather refreshing and exhilarating, they would conquer the burning and destroying fire of tribulation and persecution.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

HOW CHRIST IS ALWAYS WITH HIS CHURCH.

I. By preservation. II. By singular direction. III. By special protection. IV. By love and benevolence. V. By paternal correction. VI. By his presence in the Eucharist.

"Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." (MATT. 28 : 20.)

AFTER the Prophet Ezechiel had described the division of Jerusalem into twelve gates or exits, he concluded his book in these words : "And the name of the city from that day, was The Lord is there," (48 : 35). This imperfectly applies to Jerusalem in which God dwelt for a short time, from Esdras to Titus and Vespasian ; but it perfectly applies to the Church and to it alone, according to St. Jerome and many others, because it is the Church alone with which God promised in to-day's gospel to constantly abide. After he had commanded his Apostles to go forth into the whole world : "Going therefore, teach ye all nations, etc." he concluded his sermon in the words of the text : "Behold I am with you, etc." And thus Matthew closes his gospel as Ezechiel did his prophecy. The Church, therefore, is that city whose name is "the Lord is there." Behold the reasons.

I. He is always with his Church by preservation, by which he keeps it so undefiled that it can never decay. The words of the text prove this. For if the Church could decay, how would Christ be in it all days even to the consummation of the world ? Who could be with him who does not exist ? It will not do to say that he spoke of the Apostles only, because the Apostles were not to live for all time. In them, therefore, he understood, as did the first Christians, the whole Church. Whence it is evident first, that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ ; because it alone comes

down in an uninterrupted series from the Apostles, and moreover Christ was always with it. As the old heretical sects did not begin from Christ, so they were not always with him, but perished. It is evident, secondly, that the heretics of our day are not in the Church of Christ, because Christ was not always with them; before Luther, they themselves did not exist. Let them show the continuation and derivation of their faith through each of the ages; let them show in which centuries who were the Fathers who taught that Christ is not really present in the Eucharist; that Mass is idolatry; that the Pope is Antichrist; that the Saints are not to be invoked; that there is no free will; no merit of works; that God is the author of sin, etc. Since they cannot do this, they are forced to say that the Church of Christ could and did decay from the time of Gregory the Great to their own times. Therefore, according to them, Christ deserted his spouse, the Church, for nearly nine hundred years, and the gates of hell prevailed against it—the pillar and ground of truth. The Mistress of faith and Doctor of truth absconded, whom Christ ordered to be sought and listened to in all doubts and difficulties. All these are in direct opposition to Holy Scripture and make a liar of God.

II. By a singular direction with which he so directs it that it cannot err, and be seduced in matters of faith.—This direction is given specially to the Holy Father, so that he cannot make and publish decrees unless they be in conformity with the true faith. God formerly made a promise to Abraham the father of faith: "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy protector" (Gen. 15 : 1). The same he made to Peter, the second father of faith, and to his successors: "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (Luke 22 : 32). And this prayer was surely efficacious for he never permitted any Roman Pontiff to declare or order to be believed anything heretical. The Church was in great fear when that ambitious and wicked man Vigilius, a follower of the heretical Theodora Augusta, was forcibly elected to the Papacy; but to the great astonishment of all, he was suddenly changed into another man, he condemned the followers of Theodora and, regardless of her snares, Theodora herself. It is related that the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove to the Pontiffs St. Gregory, Fabian, Eugene and Gregory while they were writing decrees. And unless there were such direction, how could the Church continue to

exist, since Councils could and did err? In the other ministers of the Church there is this direction lest they should err in the administration of the Sacraments, in teaching, in hearing confessions, etc. Although it sometimes happens that errors are committed by some; they are rare, however. Some may not live exactly as they should, yet the doctrines they preach are correct, as is also their administration of the Sacraments.

III. By a special protection.—The hedge planted around a vineyard is a sign of this, namely, the guarding of Angels and Saints, by whose intervention he is present in the Church in afflictions and dangers, no less than formerly in the old law by the pillar of fire and of cloud. History supplies indubitable proof of this protection afforded the Church in the numerous wars waged against her. Let heretics show the same and we will believe that Christ is with them. In the face of this it certainly would be rash to deny that the Church is the repository of the true faith. It will not do to say that they were demons who represented the images of Saints; for how could the devil fight for Christ against his own? It is most certain that, by all those victories, the kingdom of Christ was greatly enlarged, while that of the devil was lessened. Are not the devils always fighting among themselves? How, therefore, can their kingdom stand? And even though there be no harmony among them, yet they are united against Christ.

IV. By love and benevolence which encircles it above all the kingdoms of other sects.—He protected and exalted in a special manner the Princes who defended the Catholic Church. Constantine and Charles both surnamed Great, intrepid defenders of the Church, by the aid of God, achieved wonderful things and ruled with remarkable happiness. St. Augustine says: "God showered so many earthly gifts on Constantine, who did not seek aid from the demons, but who worshipped God himself, as no one could dare to wish for. He held and defended the whole Roman world; in carrying on wars, he was most victorious; in routing tyrants, he was most fortunate; dying of old age, he left his sons rulers." God so favored the elder Theodosius that, during the battle, the weapons of the enemy were turned on themselves; while the younger was at home praying, his army was victorious, and about one hundred thousand Saracens were hurled by Angels into the Euphrates, says Socrates. The Emperor

Honorius, by the aid of God, in one battle destroyed more than one hundred thousand Goths, and did not lose one of his own. As long as Justinian and Heraclius adhered to the faith, they were victorious; but as soon as they fell, their kingdoms dwindled. In modern times this protection was so apparent that the enemies of the Church declared God to be a Papist; Goliath can be killed with his own sword. We are thankful for this testimony, that God at some time at least was a Papist; if at some time, he always was and always will be, for he says: "I am God, and I do not change."

V. By paternal correction.—For as a father shows great signs of love for his son nevertheless he chastises him whom he loves, so as to withdraw him from vice and urge him on to virtue; so Christ acts with his Church, for which he foretold all manner of persecutions and adversities. It is he of whom St. John Baptist says: "The winnowing fan is in his hand, and he shall clean up his threshing-floor." For when, through a long reign of peace and quiet in the Church, vices are apt to grow, then Christ takes the winnowing fan to clean up. When, during the reign of the Christian Emperor, Philip I., the virtue and vigor of the faithful were languishing in peace, God sent Decius and Valerian to arouse them by dire persecution. Eusebius gives, as the cause of the persecution of Diocletian, the corrupt morals of Ecclesiastics and laics, fostered by long continued peace and liberty. Therefore in time of peace and prosperity, a great deal of chaff grew in the Church. And therefore the fan of tribulation is used to separate the chaff from the wheat; to destroy the former and to preserve the latter. As in the time of Decius, at the first threatening word of the enemy, very many of the faithful lost their faith; nor were they overcome by the force of persecution, as though this was what they had always been looking for; so it happened in the time of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. The faithful were given up to luxury, ambition, avarice, contempt for sacred things, neglect of the Sacraments, etc.; and therefore God wished to clean the floor. Men became like chaff, fickle and ready to embrace any doctrine; ready to fly with a favorable wind,—and they did fly from the Church; the rest were confirmed in the faith. So that, in a few years, he again cleaned his Church, when he began to afflict and oppress her by heretical inmates who threw the Catholics from the windows, banished them into exile and

put them to death. This was a paternal chastisement, for, with the war in Germany, he sifted the wheat of Catholics, and shook out the chaff of heretics from Austria, Bohemia, the Palatinate, etc.

VI. By the real presence in the Holy Eucharist.—In this wonderful and special manner, he wished to remain always with his Church. First, for as in heaven, he is adored by the blessed spirits ; so on earth, he should be more earnestly adored by us ; although he is clearly perceived by those ; by us obscurely only and through faith. The presence of a General has much to do with keeping his soldiers in obedience, fear and discipline, when it is known he is present. It is fitting, therefore, since the Church is the same militant and triumphant that she should most earnestly worship and adore her king in both places. Otherwise many would think and say with Eliphaz : "The clouds are his covert, and he doth not consider our things, and he walketh about the poles of heaven" (Job 22 : 14). Even on earth, we have our God and we can say with Chrysostom : "While we are in this life, this mystery makes earth a heaven for us."

Secondly, that, when afflicted and cast down, we should fly to him with greater confidence and hope for aid. For this reason, in the old law, God wished the Ark to be built like a triumphal car, in which he showed his presence, his power and his glorious triumph. Hence Moses says, "Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them as our God is present to all our petitions" (Deut. 7 : 4). With much more truth can we Christians say this, with whom Christ God and man, truly and corporally dwells in the Blessed Sacrament. When David went to the cave of Odollam all his father's house went with him, and he became the Prince of the afflicted ; and all that were in distress and oppressed with debt and under affliction of mind gathered themselves under him and he became their Prince (1 Kings 22 : 2). So Christ in the Eucharist which is a memorial of his death ; as Odollam signifies a testimony of his misery,—and there he is always ready to receive the afflicted and heart saddened. "Trust in him all ye congregation of people ; put out your hearts before him : God is our helper forever (Ps. 61 : 9). Either Christ could not permanently be in the Eucharist or did not wish to be. He could not ? How then is he omnipotent ? How can he be there when he is received ? He did not wish to be ? But he is our highest good, and what

is more conformable to his goodness than this glorious and saving institution?

Thirdly, that by his presence, he might animate us to fight against the wiles of the devil, and bravely suffer all kinds of adversity. St. Peter, seeing his wife led to death, encouraged her saying: "Remember your Lord." Let us also remember Christ present in the Eucharist.

Fourthly, that we should constantly remember him. When a friend is about to depart, he generally leaves a token of remembrance. When Christ was about to leave us and ascend into heaven, he left us his body, wonderfully enclosed in the Sacrament of his love.

Fifthly, to prove our faith, devotion and religion towards himself; and that, not so much for his own glory as for our benefit. As he blessed the house of Obededom because he received the Ark of the Covenant into his house and reverently kept it there; so he is disposed to bless us, if we becomingly worship him as our king, and as courtiers, wait on his table.

He wishes to prove whether we believe the Son of God asserting that he is in the Holy Eucharist, as we in our first parents believed the serpent asserting that in the tree of life was power of deifying us. He wishes to prove with what reverence we assist at Mass; how eagerly and how often we approach the holy table; what devotion and preparation we bring to it; with what humility we adore him; how frequently we visit him to tell him all our trials and seek his help. At the last day, he shall say to his faithful ones: "I was your guest on earth; I was naked and a captive; you clothed me and visited me; come ye blessed." And to the wicked: "I was naked and a captive, and you did not clothe me, nor visit me; depart from me."

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS A GREAT SUPPER.

I. On account of Christ, who instituted it. II. The great number of those invited. III. The choice food. IV. Its great necessity. V. Its great utility. It strengthens for martyrdom; it arms against enemies; it strengthens the weak; it sustains some without corporal food. VI. Its great danger.

"A certain man made a great supper." (Luke 14 : 16.)

NOT in vain did the Holy Ghost wish to be described and depicted in so many colors, the great banquet of Assuerus, of which we read in the book of Esther. It prefigured the Eucharist which Christ instituted before his passion, and of which the Church sings: "O sacred banquet in which Christ is received." By Assuerus, which is interpreted prince or head, we understand Christ who is the Prince of Kings and of earth, and the head of all men.

The city Susan in which the banquet was held, designates the Church; for Susan signifies lily; and of the Church, the Spouse says: "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (Cantic. 2 : 2). The tabernacles, under which very many tables were prepared for the banquet, denote the various dioceses in which are many parishes. The banquet given in the court of the royal garden signifies the banquet of the Church militant given in the court of the Church triumphant; it is but a step from the former to the latter. Justly we call this banquet a great supper, because it is greater by far and more excellent than the banquet of Assuerus, which we will now show.

I. Because he is great who invites and gives the supper, Christ God. Assuerus was the greatest king of his time (Esther 11 : 13); but Christ more truly and absolutely is the greatest of all kings. First, because he was king from all eternity; and moreover he was born a king, as the Magi say:

"Where is he that is born king?" (Matt. 2 : 2). Secondly, because he himself created all other kings, for he says: "By me kings reign" (Prov. 8 : 15). Thirdly, because his kingdom is not perishable as those of other kings, but eternal. "Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages" (Ps. 144 : 13). Fourthly, because it is universal. All other kings are his servants and vassals. "And all the kings of the earth shall adore him : all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 71 : 11). If it be considered something great to be invited by a king to a banquet ; it certainly is more for us to be invited by the King of kings. A man counted himself first among the princes of Assuerus, because he was invited to the banquet by the King and Queen. "And after this he said : Queen Esther also hath invited me : and with her also I am to dine to-morrow with the king" (Esther 5 : 12). Have we not a greater right to rejoice who have been invited by the Son of God himself? Assuerus gave that banquet for two reasons. First, to show the power and riches of the glory of his kingdom. Secondly, on account of the beginning of his reign in Susan, for according to the Hebrew, Susan was the imperial city. Christ likewise instituted his supper, first, on account of the beginning of his reign, which he fully commenced in his passion, when he placed his throne on the cross. Therefore, immediately before his passion, he instituted a memorial of his passion, in which he gave himself up to death as food for us, as he gives himself to us in the Eucharist. Secondly, to show in the Eucharist the riches of his power, wisdom and goodness. Of his power, because by his only word, and in a moment, he performed many miracles as well in the bread as in his body ; when he changed bread into his body, when he sustained the accidents without the substance ; when he constituted a whole in the smallest particle, etc. Of his goodness and charity, because he gave himself to us as our food and with himself everything : virtues, merit, glory. Of his wisdom, because he formed an ineffable manner of communicating himself to us and intimately uniting himself to men ; so that by him and in him we live, as the branches on the vine.

II. Because very many have been invited.—Assuerus invited to his banquet all the princes and their children ; and all the people to be found in Susan from the greatest to the least. Greater by far is the banquet of Christ. He prepared it first, for the Apostles, and through them afterwards invited

to it the whole world, and he extends the same invitation to-day to all the faithful without distinction. The highest and the lowest are welcome; the same amount of food is there for each one. Even after all these centuries and after so many millions have banqueted, there is no diminution in the supply, but an over abundance for all. The banquet of Assuerus lasted for one hundred and eighty days; the banquet of Christ has already lasted nineteen hundred years and will last to the end of time. One was allowed to enjoy the banquet of Assuerus only once; but he is allowed to enjoy the banquet of Christ as often as he pleases. Then, as in the banquet of Assuerus, there were many servers whom Josephus calls deacons, so in the Church there are by far more servers of the Holy Eucharist; priests and deacons ordained specially for this, and endowed with a heavenly character, who preside at the table of the Lord and who carefully instruct those who approach it.

III. Because the food is most choice.—In the banquet of Assuerus, there were various kinds of choice food served in the most costly vessels. The best of wine was in abundance. In the banquet of Christ, the food and drink are so choice that there can be nothing more excellent. First, Christ is there with his divinity, which is the fountain of all good. Secondly, with his soul most full of wisdom, grace and virtue; by its perfection surpassing all creatures. Thirdly, with his blessed flesh formed by the Holy Ghost from the virginal flesh of his mother, and hypostatically united to his divinity. Fourthly, with his most precious blood shed for us: one drop of which is of infinite value and more precious than all the merits of all the Saints. What greater delicacies could we wish for? "A great misery," says St. Francis, "and a deplorable weakness, when you have Christ himself present, and you desire something else in this world. Let every man fear, and the whole world tremble, and the heavens rejoice when Christ the Son of the living God is in the hands of the priest on the altar." Then the Eucharist is made in a wonderful manner. First, by consecration, with one word and in a moment, bread is changed into the body of Christ. Secondly, the accidents of bread remain without the substance. Thirdly, Christ with his whole natural quantity is in each small host, and in each particle of it, if it be broken. Fourthly, he is in all places at the same time, wherever there are consecrated hosts. Fifthly, in the host he does not suffer

though it be broken or burnt. Sixthly, this food remains always the same to-day as on the day of its institution.

IV. Because this supper is very necessary for all.—In the banquet of Assuerus, the queen did not wish to obey the command of the king, and so incurred his anger, and was repudiated by him. They may expect the same from Christ who despise his supper. In this sense we can understand, as we read in the Gospel, what the angry master of the house said to his servants: "None of those men that were invited shall taste of my supper." This will happen to those who refuse to receive the Holy Eucharist at Easter time and at the hour of death. Of it the Lord says: "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6 : 54). The Eucharist was instituted by Christ as a necessary provision for our journey, for without it (at least in desire) we cannot reach our heavenly country. Christ seems to have alluded to this when he said: "I have compassion on the multitude for they have nothing to eat, and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way" (Mark 8: 2). For as the body cannot live long without corporal food, but it soon weakens and falls: so also the soul cannot exist without spiritual food. The Eucharist was prefigured in that bread, with which Elias was nourished by an Angel. "And he walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto the Mount of God, Horeb" (3 Kings. 19 : 8.)

V. Because it is of the greatest utility. In his banquet, Assuerus wished to exhilarate the guests; to engage himself with and delight in the displayed beauty of his queen. But greater by far is the fruit of the supper of Christ the Lord. Besides its ordinary effects, it produces wonderful and extraordinary ones. First, it formerly strengthened the martyrs and animated them to bravely endure all hardships; and for this reason, during the time of persecution, they were allowed to carry the Eucharist home with them, that they might receive it immediately before their martyrdom; this was also granted by the Pope to Mary, Queen of Scots, who had been deprived of the services of a priest. For the same reason, Anacleus decreed that all Christians assisting at Mass should communicate on account of the fierce persecution of Trajan.

Secondly, it armed the Christians against their enemies and prepared them for victory. History records many

astounding victories for the Christian arms through the aid of the Holy Eucharist. Among others, is the remarkable victory gained by Alphonsus VIII,. King of Castile, over the Saracens, on July 16, 1212. Over two hundred thousand Saracens were destroyed, while the Christians lost but twenty-five. This victory is celebrated to this day in Spain, and is called the "triumph of the cross." In the year 834, when King Ramirus, wounded, betook himself to the mountains and besought God for aid, St. James appeared to him ordering all his soldiers to go to confession and Communion; then, seated on a white horse at their head, he charged the enemy, who were completely routed, with seventy thousand Moors dead on the field. On account of this, the Spanish soldiers worship St. James as their patron Saint.

Thirdly, it strengthens the weak, as is shown by many examples in the lives of the Saints. Fourthly, it sustains life even without the assistance of corporal food. It sustained the Emperor Louis the Pious for forty days; a girl, in the reign of Tully, for three years. Even in our own day, we know of its wonderful effect in the case of Louise Lateau.

VI. Because it is most dangerous to receive it unworthily. In the banquet of Assuerus, there was abundance of royal wine which was of the best, and because it was most dangerous to drink much of it, the king ordered that no one should force another to drink it. Likewise in the supper of Christ it is common bread and wine, but royal, that is celestial, angelic, divine. Of such wine Christ spoke: "No man putteth new wine into old bottles, otherwise the wine will burst the bottles" (Mark 2 : 22). New wine is the Eucharist, and because Judas received it unworthily (it is probable according to St. Luke and St. Augustine that he received it) he went and hanged himself.

Wherefore the Apostle orders the body of the Lord to be discerned, that is, not to be taken as common bread, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11 : 29). He confirms this later: "Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep;" that is, they become sick and die because they have communicated unworthily. Formerly, many on account of this sin were sorely punished by the devil. The Eucharist is death to the wicked, and life to the just. Honey is harmful to the choleric, and beneficial to the phlegmatic. The same

pillar that illumined the Hebrews cast darkness over the Egyptians. From the same fount the Hebrews drank clear water; but the Egyptians blood, as Josephus writes. From the same flower the bee extracts honey, while the spider extracts poison. Wherefore, lest we drink death at the fount of salvation, let each one purify himself and thus eat of that bread. Since, therefore, this supper is so great, let our reverence for it be great also; great piety and devotion in adoring it, great humility and abjection in venerating it; great preparation for receiving it.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

POWER AND EFFICACY OF PENANCE.

I. It destroys sin. II. Restores grace. III. Restores good works that were dead. VI. Renders the conscience tranquil. V. Restores reputation. VI. Changes the decree of God. VII. Changes one into another man. VIII. Edifies our neighbor. IX. Bears violence against heaven.

"Now the publicans and sinners drew near unto him." (LUKE. 15 : 1.)

HAPPY publicans, happy sinners, who draw near to Christ! By this they deserved that Christ should draw near to them. As St. James says: "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (4 : 8). But how can we draw near to God? The same apostle answers: "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners: and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow." This is as if he had said: Do penance; cast out sin from your hands and heart. By this means Magdalene approached Jesus; and undoubtedly also the publicans and sinners in to-day's gospel. Let us consider the power and efficacy of penance; so that following their example we also may approach Christ. The efficacy of penance we learn from the parable of the prodigal son, which follows those of the shepherd and of the woman. The son entered into himself, returned to his father and was received with a paternal embrace; which indicates that the sinner through penance, his sins having been wiped out, will be reconciled to God. He was clothed with the first robe, and this is the first grace justifying and adorning the soul of the sinner. A ring was put on his hand, and this indicates the principle of good actions by which the justified can merit

heaven, and also the restoration of actions formerly dead by sin. A banquet was prepared for him; this indicates peace and tranquillity of conscience, because a secure mind is like a continual feast (Prov. 15:15). Shoes were placed on his feet, and those denote a good name; for formerly only freedmen wore shoes; the slaves were barefoot. His father fell upon his neck; this signifies that God changes his decree towards the justified. The fatted calf was killed for him; as by penance the sinner in a way is killed, and the just created. That banquet was a joyous one for him; so the penitent delights and edifies his neighbor.

I. It destroys sin according to the words of Christ: "Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."—Such is its efficacy that it destroys sins and does not permit them to return even if one commit them again, although such a one sins more gravely. "For the gifts of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). "He will cast all our sins into the bottom of the sea" (Mich. 7:19). A stone cast into the sea does not rise again; so neither sins once steeped in the blood of Christ by penance. Moses said to the Israelites about Pharao's army already submerged in the Red sea: "The Egyptians whom you now see, you will never see again," for they were all drowned; so sins are so drowned in the blood of Christ that they can never return. God will blot them from his memory, as we read in Ezechiel: "If the wicked do penance for all his sins, I will not remember all his iniquities" (18:21). As a confirmation of this, we do not read that Christ, after his resurrection, accused Peter of having denied him, nor the Apostles for having abandoned him; but all these sins, already atoned for, he buried in the deepest silence. Finally, penance destroys not one sin alone but all sins. And as all the Egyptians were drowned, for not one escaped; so all mortal sins are destroyed by penance, and not only all that we confess but also those which, through ignorance or forgetfulness, or any other blameless cause, we omit; for the gifts and judgments of God are perfect and entire.

II. It restores to man first grace and spiritual life of the soul; original health and beauty; the gifts and supernatural virtues received in Baptism.—As all leprosy was washed from Naam while bathing in the Jordan, "and his flesh was restored to him, as the flesh of a little boy" (4 Kings 5:14), so the soul in that purity, which is similar or equivalent to innocence, is restored to the penitent. We know that Mag-

dalene after penance was loved by Christ in preference to others. Peter was raised to the highest dignity in the Church, and was more beloved than others ; so much so that he acquired more by penance than he lost by sinning. Nabuchodonasor, after he had done penance, returned to himself, and acknowledged and glorified the true God whom he denied before ; and it is probable that he so died and was saved. Many have labored to find the philosopher's stone, by whose touch all things were turned into gold; but as yet, it has not been found. Penance, however, is such a stone, through which the soul, that was dead, comes to life ; what was horrid becomes beautiful ; all its moral works, that before were brass, become golden and meritorious of eternal life ; so that a drink of cold water given to the thirsty has its reward in heaven.

III. It restores the good works that were dead through sin, and their merits and rights to formerly deserved crowns of glory. It renews the spiritual marriage of the Holy Ghost with the soul ; and moreover restores to the soul as a spouse the ornaments which God had given it. Our heavenly Father knew that he placed the treasures of his grace in frail vessels which are easily broken, and that it would be a great affliction to his servants if all their past labor were in vain ; therefore in the vessel repaired by penance he replaced the treasure which it had contained. This he promised them (in a mystical sense) by Joel when he said : "And I will restore to you the years which the locust and the bruchus and the mildew and the palmer-worm have eaten" (Joel 2 : 25). Who does not know the damage wrought to gardens and crops by these animals ? Of the Egyptian locusts we read : "And they covered the whole face of the earth, wasting all things. And the grass of the earth was devoured and what fruits soever on the trees, which the hail had left : and there remained not anything that was green on the trees or in the herbs of the earth of all Egypt" (Exod. 10 : 15). In the same way, mortal sin in a moment feeds on the soul, be it ever so adorned with all the splendor of virtue. "If the just man turn himself away from his justice and do iniquity, all his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered" (Ezech. 18 : 24). But penance restores all that sin had destroyed.

IV. It renders the conscience tranquil and serene and more delightful than any banquet. For as the air which was dense and obscure by clouds becomes serene after it has

lightened them by rain ; so our soul, led in the darkness of sins, becomes tranquil, joyful and delightful when it casts them down and pours them into the ears of the confessor. Job testifies to this : "If thou wilt put away from thee the iniquity that is in thy hand, and let not injustice remain in thy tabernacle : then mayst thou lift up thy face without spot, and thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear. Thou shalt also forget misery and remember it only as waters that are passed away. And brightness like that of the noon-day shall arise to thee at evening : and when thou shalt think thyself consumed, thou shalt rise as the day-star. And thou shalt have confidence, hope being set before thee, and being buried thou shalt sleep secure. Thou shalt rest and there shall be none to make thee afraid" (Job 11 : 14–19). By all these, he describes the joy of the man who through penance has extricated himself from the net of sin. When the Ark of the Lord was brought back to Cariathiarim from Philistine captivity, "all the house of Israel rested following the Lord" (1 Kings 7 : 2) ; that is, they lived in great quiet and tranquillity. So when one, snatched from the captivity of Satan, has recovered the grace of God, how can he but have peace and quiet of mind. Certainly when the good thief heard the words : "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise," he was satisfied, and sought nothing else, neither relaxation of pain, nor a hastening of death, nor envy toward the Jews. With what joy of mind and what equanimity did he pass the remaining moments of life on the cross ! What a river of joys flooded his heart, when he heard the voice of Christ ! He, who before could scarcely examine his conscience for the horror of sin, after absolution retires in joy and rests serene in the recesses of his heart.

V. It restores the good name which sin had taken away. As a tree, that has been injured in any part of the trunk, soon covers the wound with a new growth of bark, that no trace of the injury is left ; so penance and a correction of morals makes amends for a former bad name, and restores his honor to the fallen one. Such was the case with David, Magdalene, Matthew, Zachæus, Peter, Paul and others of whose sanctity only we speak, not of their sins of which in after life they repented. Adam and Eve as a sign of repentance clothed themselves with fig leaves, because as St. Irenæus says : they were more tormenting to the flesh than any others ; a species as it were of hair-cloth. Wherefore, if

the sinner strives to make reparation for his crimes, God will soon come to him and clothe him with honor and esteem, so that he may again appear among men. And these are the shoes of the prodigal son with which he walks not as a slave but as a freeborn.

VI. It changes the decree of God, as Jeremias says speaking in the person of God : "If that nation against which I have spoken, shall repent of their evil, I also will repent of the evil that I have thought to do them" (18 : 8). He proved this in the case of the Ninivites who listened to the preaching of Jonas, and who punished themselves in sackcloth and ashes. "God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said he would do to them, and he did it not" (Jonas 3 : 10). See how the penance of the Ninivites wrenched the rod from God and changed his decree. Tertullian says : "Inasmuch as you do not spare yourself, in so much will God spare you." St. Gregory calls penance the city of refuge, because the sinner fleeing to it is free from death and the anger of God.

VII. It changes one into another man from the carnal to the spiritual, from a beast of lust into a man. An example of this was Nabuchodonosor, who, on account of his sins, was cast out from among men, in the woods among beasts; crawled on hands and feet and fed like an animal. Afterwards, being restored and coming to himself and penitent, he put on the species of man and the dignity of king (Dan. 4). So, true and sincere repentance disrobes man of beastly habits and clothes him with human ones.

VIII. It edifies our neighbor. In the old law, whatever touched the flesh of the holocaust was sanctified ; signifying that the groans of the penitent cleanse the imitator.

IX. Finally, it bears violence against heaven, and this was foreshadowed in the old law, while once a year on the day of expiation, the people afflicted themselves with fasting and penance, and the high priest entered the holy of holies (Levit. 16). This indicates that the way to heaven is opened by penance. Since penance is such a powerful battering ram, let us use it effectively to destroy the walls of heaven. This salutary means is given us by God himself.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

PETER'S BOAT A TYPE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

I. In the Church Peter is the ruler and his successors. II. In the Church is the pure word of God. III. In the Church are true miracles. IV. In the Church there is one visible head. V. The Church is led into the deep. VI. By the Church the faith is propagated everywhere. VII. The Church has the calling and governing of ministers. VIII. From the Church heretics recede. IX. The Church is tempest tossed, but does not sink.

"And going into one of the ships that was Simon's" (Luke 5 ; 3).

When God wished to send Moses into Egypt to be the leader of the Hebrew people in their flight from Egypt to the promised land, he first showed him by a figure the type of people he was to govern and also of his own ruling. He showed him a bush which was burning but was not consumed ; and this signified the Hebrew people, who under Pharao were burning from Egyptian scourgings and burdens, who, however, were not destroyed but rather so strengthened that by many and various plagues they had wounded the Egyptians, by whom they were persecuted. He then showed him another. When he let fall the rod he was carrying, it was turned into a serpent. This signified that that same people, who under Pharao crawled as a serpent, under the rule of Moses would be restored to their original liberty and power. Symbolically it denoted the power of Moses, by which he was to punish the Egyptians ; but to rule the Hebrews ; so that the rod was a serpent to the Egyptians ; but a shepherd's crook to the Hebrews. For the same reason in to-day's gospel, Christ, about to designate Peter as supreme ruler and pastor of his people, showed him the miracle of the wonderful draught of fishes ; and by that clearly placed before him a type of his future rule, and of the Church which he was to capture and govern for all time.

I. Christ went into one of the ships which was Simon's, not into the other which was near it. He certainly had an object in view in this choice, for he wished to indicate that he was to be found in that Church alone which is governed by Peter and his successors. St. Ambrose says : "Christ went into that boat alone of the Church of which Peter is the ruler." Whence the Roman Pontiff has on his ring and seal a boat with Peter as captain. The other boat signifies a false religion, which is not named nor is it said whose it would be, because nowhere are they with God who are outside the Church. There are many such ships along the shores of this world—the Lutheran, Calvinist, Hussite, etc., all which call to the people and promise to bring them safely to heaven ; but if you wish to be safe, climb into that boat into which Christ went and which is governed by Peter and his successors. Meaningly *one* is said, because the Church of Christ should be one, and because she alone is the spouse of Christ, who is not a bigamist (Cant. 6 : 8) ; because there is "one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father" (1 Cor. : 12) ; because all its members dispersed throughout the whole earth are most tightly bound together in one body under Christ their head ; and this Christ prayed for : "Father, preserve them as one as we are one." Hence they most gravely err who believe that they can be saved in any faith whatsoever. All the sects are in error and cannot exist in peace, since they are without a visible head and supreme arbitrator of controversies ; and as long as they believe in the private interpretation of Scripture.

II. From this ship Christ teaches the people, and that seated, that is paternally, without intermission through his preachers. Because only in the ship of Peter, or the Church of Rome, has the pure word of God been preached through all ages ; and indeed we can show doctors of our faith from the time of the Apostles to our own. No sect can do that. In it alone are washed and cleansed the nets of Scripture and of holy dogmas. The other sects corrupt the Scriptures and have dogmas filled with the filth of impurities.

III. In Peter's ship, the Lord confirms his sermon by the miraculous draught of fishes. Likewise in the Church the evangelical preaching has been confirmed by miracles in all ages ; by the casting out of devils, by the raising the dead, by the spirit of prophecy, etc. ; and this was necessary since a new doctrine is brought to introduce a new religion. If

testimonial letters are not believed, unless they have the appended seal, much less will there be faith in a new gospel unconfirmed by any miracle; since very many mysteries of faith surpass our intellect, natural arguments will not suffice to confirm them: supernatural ones are required. Hence Mark says of the Apostles: "But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed" (16 : 20). Paul says of himself: "Yet the signs of my apostleship have been wrought in you, in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12 : 12). Therefore, the Apostles everywhere should show this seal and prove their doctrine and mission. Now in the Catholic Church it is clear that in each age many miracles have been wrought, and if, as may be said, they were performed through the aid of the devil, the whole world will cry out because, moved by many and powerful arguments, it looked on them as true miracles wrought by the power of God. Many of them were written of by holy men. Those of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus by St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Basil; of St. Benedict by St. Gregory the Great; of St. Hilarion by St. Jerome; of St. Malachy by St. Bernard; of St. Francis by St. Bonaventure of whom St. Thomas said: "Let us permit a Saint to work for a Saint." The writings of these authorities have never been refuted. If miracles were to be rejected, all history should be rejected. Secondly, they were not wrought by aid of the devil, because they were wrought by holy men; many surpassed the power of the devil, such as the raising the dead; they have continued, those of the devil do not last; if the devil wrought them to hold Catholics in error, why does he not do the same for other heretics, if Catholics are heretics? On the contrary, the founders of different sects cannot produce one miracle to confirm their faith, unless it be to pervert for a short time the voluptuous to that religion which encourages the liberty of the flesh, enkindles the fires of vice, and excludes sanctity and austerity of life.

IV. In this ship there is only one Captain, to whom it is said: "Launch into the deep;" he is the only one asked to loose the ship from her moorings. So also in the Church there is and should be a supreme, visible head, Peter or his successor. For as in a ship, there should be only one Captain, lest there should be discord and certain destruction awaiting it; so in the Church, where there is not one supreme ruler, nec-

essarily numerous schisms arise, and such a kingdom divided among itself cannot stand. As the foxes of Samson, bound by the tails, but separated by the heads, destroyed the crops of the Philistines, so that religion which has not one head but many or none at all ruins everything; while one interprets Scripture one way, another, another, each one sets himself up as a judge in controversies of faith. Therefore, Christ, foreseeing this, appointed Peter supreme pastor and judge of all controversies, to whom especially he gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whom he ordered to feed his sheep; whom he promised assistance; the same he intimated in to-day's gospel: "Launch out into the deep. From henceforth thou shalt catch men;" *catch* not *lose* them.

V. This ship is ordered to be launched and it is launched by Peter, into the deep; first into the capital of the world, Rome, so that from there the Church and the faith of Christ (for men of all nations were found there) could more easily reach the peoples of the whole world; or as St. Leo says: "Most Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, repaired to the citadel of Rome so that the light of the truth, which was revealed for the salvation of all, should more efficaciously diffuse itself as from the head to the entire body of the world." As the tower of Pharao near Alexandria showed the port to navigators, so the Church of Rome. And who will not ascribe it to a singular providence of God, that Rome, the head of the world, became the head of the Pontiff without force or arms? Secondly, into the deep, that is, perfection of life, to which the Church leads according to the words of Christ. In it there have always been many who, through voluntary poverty, chastity and obedience, have followed the evangelical counsels to which the Lord invited that young man: "If you wish to be perfect, go sell what thou hast, etc."; and as so many religious orders show in which God is served and praised day and night. On the other hand, other sects, especially in our times, do not launch out into the deep because they not only do not follow the evangelical counsels nor persuade others to do so, but they even despise them and dissuade others from them. No one is found among them who renounces his possessions and honors, and embraces poverty and humility for the love of Christ; who forswears carnal pleasures for a life of virginity; who subjects his will to the will of another. All these they condemn, and if their pastor is not married they suspect him of leaning towards the Catholic faith. Thirdly,

into the deep, that is, to the most remote regions of the world, to propagate the faith and to convert gentiles. This the Church has done in every age, sending her missionaries into every corner of the globe. Heretical ministers remain at home resting quietly on the shore, as it were, and concerned more about temporal than eternal things.

VI. From this boat the nets are let down, and a great number of fishes of all kinds is taken; so in the Catholic Church are let down the nets of evangelical preaching throughout the whole universe. For "their sound is gone forth in the whole earth;" the faith is propagated on all sides, many Gentiles of all nations are captured; moreover, all who are converted to the faith, are converted by the Church of Rome. During the fifteenth century were converted and are still being converted innumerable Indians, Orientals, Japanese, etc. In the fourteenth century, twenty-five thousand Jews and Saracens were converted by St. Vincent Ferrer. In the thirteenth century many Tartars were converted by two Dominican Fathers sent out by the Holy Father. In the twelfth century the Norwegians by Eugene III. and Adrian IV.; in the eleventh century, many Hungarians at the instance of their King, St. Stephen; in the tenth century, many kingdoms embraced the faith as the works of St. Henry Emperor, Adelbert and Methodius testify; in the ninth century, the Danes and Bulgarians; in the eighth century, the Germans by St. Boniface who was sent by Gregory II; in the seventh century, the oriental Franks by St. Killian; in the sixth century, the Angles by St Augustine: in the fifth century, Britain and Scotia by Palladius. Who will count all the other nations, Ireland, Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Frisia, Westphalia, etc., which, through the preaching sons of the Roman Church, Servarius, Eligius, Patrick, Rumoldus, Amadus and others, were converted from infidelity and from barbarism to civilization? On the other hand, especially in our times, no nations have ever been converted by heretics; their only aim seems to have been the perversion of the faithful. This is not to catch fish but rather to let go those that have been caught. Whence we can most truly say that all the fish caught have been caught by the Roman Church alone; none whatever by heretical sects. Not by the Church alone but also by Peter and his successors as by the principal fisherman who with his co-operators caught the whole world.

VII. In this boat the net is broken on account of the

multitude of fishes. So in the Catholic Church the number of the faithful increased ; it was necessary with such a multitude for the net to be broken, and rents and schisms to take place according to the Apostle : " For there must be also heresies " (1 Cor. 11 : 19) ; considering the inconstancy and curiosity of men especially in such a multitude. So in a large family there must be strifes and contentions where there are so many different natures. Therefore, all who were authors of heresy departed from the Church, having broken its net. They gnawed the net of Scripture, destroying what did not please them ; preserving what pleased them ; depriving it of sense and interpreting it according to their free will. They made a hole through which they followed those nearest them, those inclined to the same liberty, which is the dangerous sea of this world. It is no wonder that in such a multitude there should be schisms and heresies ; but it is wonderful that there should be among heretics themselves, who are so few in number. All who left the Church perished in their obstinacy ; and though divided among themselves, they met the same death, having achieved nothing.

VIII. This boat called on its companions to come and help it with the capture ; so the Roman Church has the legitimate calling of ministers, and their just subordination ; also the communion of churches. As Jerusalem was the principal of the Hebrew cities, so is Rome of the Christian cities. Whoever is a Catholic is associated with Rome, that is the Sovereign Pontiff. St. Jerome writes to Damasius : " If one is joined to the chair of Peter, he is mine." According to the early Fathers, Jerome and Ambrose, whatever was Catholic was Roman. Whoever wishes to fish in the Church of Christ must be called by Peter and his companions, not by others who have no authority. Peter was called by Christ ; the companions of Peter by Peter ; those in the other boat by the companions of Peter ; so in the Church, Bishops are called by the Pope, and priests by Bishops. This boat was in danger of sinking ; but it did not sink. So the Church of Rome can be tossed by the waves, but it cannot be wrecked ; as Pius II. wrote to the ruler of the Turks : " You may try in vain to sink the ship of Peter ; that boat is tossed by the waves, but it never sinks." This was apparent in the three first centuries, when the ship of the Church, during so many persecutions, not only did not sink, but rather crested the

waves, as Noah's Ark did during the deluge. Also around the year five hundred, when it flourished and was vigorous under Anastasius the Eutychian Emperor ; the Arian kings of Italy, Spain and Africa ; the pagan kings of the Franks, Angles and Germans. It was apparent around the year one thousand when secular princes were noted for their sanctity : St. Henry Emperor and his wife Cunegunda, the Roman Emperor, the Greek, Canute, King of Denmark and England, St. Stephen, King of Hungary, with his son, St. Emeric, St. Robert, King of the Franks, Ferdinand the Great of Castile with his wife. Luther, through envy, in this text of to-day's gospel omits the word *almost* which is given in the old Latin and Greek texts. And it necessarily belongs here, for who can say that those boats sank entirely ? Would not Christ again, by this act, have destroyed what he had before created by a miracle ? Should we not be stupefied with Peter on account of the wonderful haul of fishes, or the increase of the Church, its stability, order, etc. ?

Should we not justly bend the knee to Christ and his Roman Church ? Let us be convinced that it was said of the chair of Peter : "Fear not," etc. Finally, let us always be suspicious of the heretical ship about which nothing is written in the gospel.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE OLD LAW AND THE NEW.

I. The old law was written on tables of stone, the new on the tables of the heart. II. The old law was obscure, the new is clear. III. The old was confined within narrow limits, the new has been spread throughout the whole earth. IV. The old was temporary, the new eternal. V. The old was a heavy yoke, the new a light one. VI. The old was one of fear and of slaves, the new of love and of children. VII. The old of itself justified no one, the new has the power of justifying. VIII. The old was for the young, the new for the grown ones. IX. The old promised only temporal things, the new eternal. The old had heaven closed, the new has it open.

"You have heard that it was said to them of old." (Matt. 5 : 21.)

It is declared that Josue, that most illustrious leader, was a type of Christ not only on account of the similarity of name (for Josue signifies the same as the most sacred name of Jesus); but also on account of other analogies. Passing over many, we read that Josue was given by the children of Israel possession of the city of Thamnathsaraa, a poor and badly constructed one, almost tottering, which he finally rebuilt and made habitable; it became famous; in the time of St. Jerome it was still in existence. Some wished its name changed and it was called Timnathcheres as it is called in the Hebrew text. What is that battered city unless the Synagogue or Mosaic law, lacerated and destroyed by the morals of the Jews. Therefore Christ began to rebuild and finish this city so that those who wished, could live comfortably in it, not as in an old but in a new one. Each name of the city is in accord with this view, for the first signifies a superfluous image, decaying and rotting; the second signifies an image of the sun. What was there in the Synagogue, only a superfluity of human traditions and of carnal sacrifices, fetid and nauseating; what was itself, only a foul-smelling image and wanting in virtue? But the Church is the image

of the sun shining far and wide, representing Christ the Sun of justice, by holiness of life, faith, worship and love. And our Josue begins to-day to build this partly from the tottering, partly from the heaped-up ruins of the old law. We shall see the difference between the old city of the Synagogue and the new one of the Church.

I. The old law was written for the Jews on tables of stone to signify the hardness of their hearts ; that they would not observe the law, says St. Augustine. Wherefore the Jews attended only to the letter of the law and for that reason, they wrote it on parchments and on the hems of their garments, so as to have it always before their eyes, and to fulfil it externally, not caring with what regard, what mind or what intention. The new law is written and inscribed for Christians, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart, that is, sensitive and flexible tables, as St. Paul says (2 Cor. 3). God himself through Jeremias says : "I will give my law in their bowels, and I will write it in their heart, and I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31 : 33). By a living voice the law was proclaimed to the faithful in Sion, and by the Holy Ghost impressed on their hearts more solidly than the old law on tables of stone. In no way, neither by threats nor torments, by wiles nor promises, could the tyrants extract the law from the hearts of so many thousands of faithful, who willingly shed their blood in defense of it. The law is imprinted on the hearts of the faithful ; with it they become eminent through faith and other illustrations, by which the excellency, the divinity and utility of the law are indicated to them. Again with it they are strengthened to not only retain the law in memory, but also to uphold it by the sacrifice of their lives.

II. The old law was obscure, hidden in many shadows of figures, and therefore signified by a veil with which the face of Moses was covered, when he was speaking to the people (Exod. 34) ; likewise by the veil of the temple which was rent through the death of Christ. Then the hidden meanings of the old law became evident. The same thing was signified by the cloud and smoke around Mt. Sinai, when God gave the law to Moses, for he said to him. "Lo now will I come to thee in the darkness of a cloud" (Exod. 19 : 9) that is, in the obscure science of law ; for the deepest mysteries of faith, Trinity, Incarnation, Eucharist, Resurrection, Judgment, eternal beatitude were shown only by figures, and that most

obscurely, and only to those who were friendly with God. The new law is clear and most lucid, as is evident from the gospels, which, with regard to the Scriptures of the old law, especially the prophecies, are as day to night. For there, each one can learn what pertains to faith, salvation and the right manner of living. What formerly the most learned Rabbis could not understand, now is readily believed by the most illiterate, and, as much as is necessary, clearly understood.

III. The old law was confined within narrow limits, not extending farther than from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, to the Hebrew nation alone included in Palestine. The new law is spread throughout the whole earth, according to David: "He shall rule from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 71 : 8).

This was designated also in the fleece of wool of Gedeon, which at first was covered with dew while the ground all around was dry; afterwards only the fleece remained dry while the ground was covered with dew (Judges 6 : 37–40). St. Augustine says: "I do not see what else is prefigured here unless we understand by the *ground* the whole earth, and the place of the fleece, the people of Israel. For we know that formerly that race was covered by the grace of the divine Sacrament as by heavenly dew, of which gift there was, as it were, a dryness among the neighboring nations who did not possess it. This people had this gift in a fleece of wool, that is, in a veil in the disguise of a secret, because it had not yet been revealed. Now we see the whole world covered by the revealed dew through the gospel."

IV. The old law was temporary, lasting only until the time of Christ; as a tutor is assigned to boys while they are young; afterwards they are placed with masters and professors. "Wherefore the law was our pedagogue in Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a pedagogue" (Gal. 3 : 24–25). With the advent of the law of Christ the pedagogue is removed. The new law, therefore, is eternal and endures to the end of the world. A type of the old law were the first tables of the law, which were broken by Moses and this signified that that law at some time was to be abolished. A type of the new law were the second tables which were not broken but were always preserved in the Ark of the Covenant, that is, the Church of Christ. Another indication of this is that the old

law was given with a movement of the earth at least of Mt. Sinai. "The earth was moved at the presence of the God of Sinai" (Ps. 67 : 9). "And all the mount was terrible" (Exod. 19 : 18), that is, in Hebrew, trembling and panting because the law was movable and was to be abolished. But the new law was given without this movement, because it was to remain to the end of the world.

V. The old law was a heavy yoke and almost unbearable; this is what the heavy hands of Moses denoted according to St. Bernard, which he could not hold up for a long time in prayer unless supported by Aaron and Hur; so also the weight of that law could not be borne long without a special grace. It was very heavy, first, on account of the multitude of precepts, which numbered six hundred and thirteen; and if so many negative, how many positive? Secondly, on account of their difficulty in food, touch, sacrifices, ceremonies and judgments. Thirdly, because those sacrifices and sacraments did not confer grace from the work performed which would lessen the difficulty; nor did that law, without faith in Christ, have the power of justifying. Finally, because heavy punishments were inflicted on delinquents for light offenses: as stoning for instance, if one had blasphemed or had violated the Sabbath; forbidden the temple if one had touched the dead, etc., etc. But the new law is called a light yoke by Christ, because the law of love only commands charity towards God and our neighbor; because it has the example of Christ; it has abundant grace to lighten the burden.

VI. The old law was a law of fear and of slaves, as St. Paul says: "For you have received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons of God (Rom. 8:15); and again he compares in Gal. 4 the yoke of slavery to Agar, and on the contrary the law of grace to Sara. Agar was a handmaid and the bondwoman of Abraham; and she, with her son Ismael, the persecutor of Isaac, the son of Sara, was expelled from the house of Abraham, denoting the Synagogue which, because its children persecuted the children of the Church, was destroyed by God. Sara, who was the true wife of Abraham, signifying the Church, always adhered to God. The new law is the law of love and of children, also of liberty, because by love and grace it gently leads us to its observance; then it confers a fourfold freedom: first, from the slavery of the appetites and

vices to which sinners are subject; secondly, from coercion and fear, so that we may observe the law, not through fear of punishment, but through love of God and virtue; thirdly, from the old law which contained judicial precepts and ceremonials not moral nor belonging to the decalogue. The fourth it confers in the resurrection from death and all misery. Therefore the new law given on Mount Sion was inscribed on the hearts of the faithful without any fear, nay, even with the greatest joy and to their consolation, through a fire not burning and consuming, but soothing and nourishing. But the old law was given on Mt. Sinai with terror, thunder and lightning, on a burning mountain in the terrible voice of a proclaiming Angel.

VII. The old law of itself, that is, without faith in Christ, justified no one, nor could it justify or absolve from sins and confer grace, as St. Paul testifies (Gal. 2 : 3 ; Hebr. 10). The sacrifices of that law were "weak and needy elements" (Galat. 4 : 9). A type of this was the altar of holocaust, which was "not solid, but empty and hollow on the inside" (Exod. 27 : 8). But the new law of itself has the power of justifying. Hence its altars are not empty, but solid and of stone. Eliseus showed a type of this to the Hebrews when he first sent his servant with his staff to raise the dead boy, but he failed; then he himself went to the child and raised him from the dead (4 Kings 4 : 35). The servant with the staff of Eliseus denotes the old law by which alone the prophets could never bring the life of grace to sinners. The descent of Eliseus himself indicates the new law of Christ which raises sinners. The same thing is seen in the parable of the good Samaritan, who alone carried the wounded man on his horse and caused him to be cured in the inn, which the priests and Levites did not do. For these represent the powerlessness of the old law; the Samaritan, the virtue of the new law to justify.

VIII. The old law was the law of young and ignorant people: for the law brought nothing to perfection (Heb. 7 : 19) ; that is, it could not perfect anyone, for it was occupied with externals only : how one should care for his appearance before men, not before God, pure and holy. If one touched a dead person, or an unclean one, the law ordered him to be washed. If one committed murder, he was killed, but the law did not expiate the sin itself. It paid attention only to external and grave sins, as we gather from to-day's gospel,

because it was prescribed for ignorant men. St. Cyril of Alexandria says "that the reason the evangelical law was not given in the beginning was because the Israelites, when freed from Egypt, were, as children, rude and ignorant, and easily led hither and thither. They needed education, which was given them in figures as a more delicate food to lead them on the way to perfection. And if one carefully studies their manners he will see that they were not worthy of the shadow, as Moses showed by breaking the tables of the law." And for this reason, St. Paul justly called that law a pedagogue, as it were, because it instructed ignorant children. A pedagogue among the Greeks was called a servant who led and ruled the child and prepared him for higher studies to be given by a professor. Therefore the new law is for men and fitted for more sublime studies. Whence its professors are more accurate and more subtle, as the Lord shows in to-day's gospel and at length (Matt. 5). It will not do for the lessons of men to be prescribed for children and *vice versa*. As the Jews were guided mainly by the senses and their own cupidities, the law prescribed for them the lowest grade—"an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth." This was to prepare them for a higher doctrine. "I tell you not to resist evil, but if one strike you on one cheek turn to him the other." Again it was said of old: "Love your friend;" another lesson for children. But the Lord raised it to a higher: "Love your enemies." Therefore the old law is not opposed to the new, but as a pedagogue sends his children to a tutor, so it transmits to Christ from the more common precepts to the more perfect. Let each one examine carefully to which school he belongs whether he is satisfied with the preparatory lessons of the Hebrews or the higher ones of the followers of Christ.

IX. The old law promised only temporal goods, as the land of promise flowing with milk and honey and abounding in all kinds of fruits; blessings for children, flocks, fields, houses, etc. "If you be willing and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land" (Isaias 1 : 19). There is no express mention of eternal goods, nor of the kingdom of heaven. The first to speak of heaven and promise it to the repentant was John Baptist, who began his discourse as Christ did: "Do penance for the kingdom of God is at hand"; then, because heaven was closed until the ascension of Christ; again, because they were a carnal race seeking

only earthly commodities, and counted for little the promise of future goods especially at that time when heaven was not open to any one. In the new law, the first thing promised is the kingdom of heaven. For this reason, the Lord begins his sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The new law scarcely mentions any promise of temporal goods, as though it would be unworthy to promise them to its observers.

X. The old law had heaven closed against it, and sent all its followers to Limbo, even the most holy—The good Jacob did not seek Joseph in heaven but in Limbo. "I will go down to my son in hell, mourning" (Gen. 38: 35). The good Ezechias when dying said: "I shall go to the gates of hell" (Is. 38 :10). No one could open the gates of heaven only the King of glory, as we read (Ps. 23). The new law, after the ascension of Christ, has heaven open, so that the souls of the just, cleansed from all stain are brought thither to eternal glory to see God face to face. St. Stephen fighting for heaven cried out: "Behold I see the heavens open" (Acts 7). St. John writes that the twelve gates of the heavenly city are open, three on each side: north, south, east and west; that is, heaven is open on all sides to receive the elect from every part of the earth. But some one may object that the old law in those things we have spoken of is not surpassed by the new; and, in fact, it seems to be more excellent on account of the divine favors and the stupendous miracles God wrought in it. But, I answer, this rather argues the imperfection of the Jews whom God, through such signs, wished to retain in his service. Secondly, there are not fewer miracles in the Church but rather far more, partly in favor of the Saints, partly wrought by the Saints themselves. If the miracles in the new law are not the same as those in the old, they are not very unlike them. Jacob saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven; St. Romuald saw such a ladder and the brothers of his Order on it ascending to heaven. The impious Sodomites blinded by God could not see the entrance to Lot's house, lest they might molest the just man; in the same way St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, with his deacon praying on the mountain and sought by his enemies, was not recognized by them, for they seemed as two trees and not two men. An Angel led the Hebrews through the desert; so also in 1144 did an Angel seated on a white horse lead the Christian army to the gates of Jerusalem. Manna rained from

heaven for the Jews ; the same happened in 418, when, in the Balearic Isles, many Jews were converted to the faith of Christ. Elias was fed by a crow ; Paul the hermit likewise was fed for sixty years. These are a few of the many which prove that the miracles of the new law are greater and more frequent than those of the old. It was formerly considered a mark of the highest honor to be a citizen of Rome ; how much greater is it for a Christian to be a citizen of the Church of Christ ! For this is nothing else than to be a citizen of heaven. "You are come to Mt. Sion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to the company of many thousands of Angels and to the church of the firstborn who are written in the heavens" (Heb. 12 : 22). Let us then give eternal thanks to God, who are citizens not of an earthly Rome, nor of the old Synagogue, but of the new Church of Christ. And this dignity we have purchased not with our own coin but with another, the most precious blood of Christ. Let us show ourselves worthy of the dignity of this name, so that passing from the Church militant we may enter with joy the eternal city of the Church triumphant.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOW APPROPRIATELY THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS HAVE BEEN INSTITUTED IN THE CHURCH.

I. Cause of the institution. II. They are instituted under visible signs. III. Definite words are used. IV. They are instituted seven in number and that aptly. V. They are to be administered by the ministrations of men. VI. A twofold virtue is conferred by the Sacraments.

"How many loaves have ye? Who said, Seven" (Mark 8 : 5).

CHRIST so wisely performed all his miracles as to intimate, through them, the remarkable doctrine concerning us. The spouse announcing the miracle of her beloved says: "His hands are turned and as of gold, full of hyacinths" (Cant. 5 : 14); that is, all his works and miracles are so round and so wisely prepared as though they were turned, and they contain not only the gold of charity but also the hyacinths of heavenly doctrine. This is evident in to-day's miracle, in which he beautifully depicts for us why he was to refresh and satiate the universal Church. As the entire multitude was fed with seven loaves, so the whole Church is nourished by seven Sacraments. As those loaves were by no means consumed, but were more than abundant; so, also the virtue of the Sacraments is inexhaustible. This satiating of four thousand people is similar to the institution of the Sacraments by which the whole Christian world is replenished. The cause why Christ provided loaves for his followers was their weakness and hunger; for he says: "I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away fasting to their homes, they will faint in the way." So also the cause of instituting the Sacraments in the Church

was the necessity of the people, the failing and feebleness of strength into which they had fallen through the sin of Adam, as into a sickness from which they could not rise without the grace of God ; in which they could accomplish nothing good, but only continue in temptations. Hence, medicine was necessary for the sick, and also food for the hungry. That man denotes this, who fell among robbers by whom he was not only wounded but also robbed. Unless the good Samaritan, Christ, moved by mercy, had prepared wine and oil for our wounds, that is, the Sacraments, for they contain those two : oil, the grace of the Holy Ghost, wine, the blood and merits of Christ ; in no manner could we live ; but, with the crowd in the gospel, we would faint in the way. Therefore we were in need of Baptism, by which we would be washed from original sin and incorporated into the Church of God. We needed Confirmation, by which we would be confirmed in the faith and so strengthened that we should never abandon it. We needed Penance by which we could rise from any sins into which we might have fallen, and also recover lost grace. We needed the Eucharist, by which we would be sustained on the road to virtue and persevere in the same. We needed Extreme Unction, by which Christian athletes would be fortified in the last and most difficult struggle against the snares of invisible enemies. We needed another grace, which would indissolubly unite married people and help them in their dangerous state to legitimately propagate their offspring. We needed another grace, which would clothe some men with power to administer these Sacraments to others, and hence the Sacrament of Holy Order ; so that the Sacraments are certain vessels in which are contained the oil and wine of our Samaritan, Christ ; they are channels through which these must flow to us ; they are seven Columns on which the Church rests (Prov. 9).

II. Christ wished to feed that multitude with corporal food borrowed from the disciples themselves when he could have used invisible and spiritual food. So he instituted the Sacraments under the visible and material signs of water, chrism, bread and wine, etc., when he could, in an invisible manner, confer invisible grace ; and this he did, first, because we are composed not only of soul but also of body, and we are accustomed to arrive at a knowledge of spiritual things by means of sensible ones. Whatever is performed in the Sacraments externally for the body, this also can be un-

derstood internally of the soul. Tertullian says: "The body is washed that the soul may be cleansed; the body is anointed that the soul may remain consecrated; the body is nourished by the species of bread and wine that the soul may be satiated with the nourishment which the body and blood of Christ give it." Secondly, because our sickness has its beginning in sensible things. Sins begin in the flesh in carnal things with which it is fed and nourished; therefore it stands to reason that the antidotes should be sensible and begin in the flesh: so that we would understand the root and origin of our disease. Therefore, because our leprosy adhered to the body and from it passed to the soul, it behoved us with Naam to enter the waters of the Jordan and wash seven times therein. The sting of the scorpion was cured by the oil of the scorpion. Thirdly, in sinning, we subjected ourselves to corporal things; it is necessary then for us if we wish to be saved to subject ourselves to these same things and in a manner extract a remedy from them; to subject our intellect to believing that God our Lord in such common things as oil and water, placed the communication of such sublime things as his graces; to believe likewise that the words of the sacramental form pronounced by the minister have the supernatural power of effecting interiorly in our souls what they signify exteriorly. Fourthly, that by these, as by military signs or passwords, we should be known and distinguished from others. Soldiers are distinguished by the colors and marks of their uniforms.

Baptism distinguishes us from Jew and Gentile; the other Sacraments distinguish us from heretics. While we may participate in these same Sacraments, how can it be that we do not begin to love one another and be bound by the chain of charity? Fifthly, that, by the use of those signs, we should publicly profess the Christian faith. While we receive them, the faith which we carry in our hearts we profess externally by deed. Sixthly, that we should have some exterior sign of sins forgiven us and of grace conferred; of our former health restored, that we may be comforted, when there is nothing wanting on our part, and for the rest that we should live in peace and tranquillity of spirit. Such a sign, but of restored health, Ezechias sought; for a greater reason we also, because our disease is invisible and spiritual, needed some sign of health restored to us.

III. Christ used words also. Taking the seven loaves,

"he gave thanks" and blessed them; that is, he besought and commanded a multiplication of them. So in the institution of the Sacraments, besides the material signs, he instituted a certain form of words such as: "I baptize thee," "I absolve," etc. First, that they might be suited to body and soul. As man consists of body and soul as matter and form; so also a Sacrament has matter and form; the former corresponds to the body, the latter to the soul; as the body is washed by water, the soul perceives and believes the Word, and in believing, becomes clean; and so a medicine suitable for body and soul was prepared. Secondly, that the Sacraments should represent Christ the Author of our salvation. As Christ is a divine word joined to a visible body, so in the Sacraments there are words joined with a visible material. Thirdly, that we might be recruited to a new and better state of life and to the fellowship of the divinity in the same manner in which we had been created. For then, "God said, and they were made." Because by Christ we are restored, (a word also was used in this restoration) to give us to understand that we were created anew spiritually. Fourthly, that what is effected by each Sacrament should be signified more clearly. Fifthly, that he would honor also the men to whose words, in the administration of the Sacraments, he gave a divine virtue instrumental for the destroying of sin and the effecting and conferring of grace. This is a great dignity given to man, that he could say with Christ to the soul of the sinner: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee;" nay, even, "I remit you your sins," I free you from hell and constitute you an heir to the kingdom of heaven. When the Lord said to the paralytic: "Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house," he arose, took up his bed and went into his house, and the multitude, seeing this, "feared and glorified God who gave such power to men." But in reality it is more to forgive sins than to say: "Take up thy bed and walk," because the grace of the soul is more excellent than the health of the body.

IV. Christ used seven loaves with which to feed the multitude. So he also instituted seven Sacraments, neither more nor less, as all Catholics always held and do hold to-day. When Christ asked: "How many loaves have ye?" the disciples unanimously answered: "Seven;" so if Catholics are asked the number of Sacraments, in whatever part of the globe, they will answer "seven." On the other hand,

heretical sects differ as to the number; some holding two, some three, some one; some say such are Sacraments, others say others. But Christ consistently instituted the Sacraments in this number. First, because by them he provides for the spiritual life in the same manner one is accustomed to provide for the corporal life. For man to live and to preserve his life, these seven seem necessary: that he be born; that he grow; that he be nourished; that he be cured if he fall sick; that he be armed if he is to oppose his enemies; that he have a ruler by whose authority and will he may be governed; finally, that by legitimate propagation of offspring he may preserve himself and the human race. These same things were necessary for our spiritual life, which is grace, and they are shown in the sacraments. By Baptism we are born again, grace being born in us, and we enter a new life. By Confirmation we grow and advance in grace and faith, as Christ about to ascend to heaven said to his Apostles: "Stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high." By the Eucharist we are nourished and sustained in virtue and grace according to the words: "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of man, you shall not have life in you." If through sin we should fall into some sickness of the soul, we are cured by Penance, and we recover lost grace. By Extreme Unction we are strengthened to fight the enemies of our soul, in our last agony. By the Sacrament of Order in the Church we are governed by our pastors and multiplied spiritually. By Matrimony the human race is preserved by a legitimate offspring and propagated corporally. Secondly, because these seven Sacraments are accommodated to the seven states of man as is seen in the soldier's Baptism, the state of those entering life; Confirmation, of those fighting; Eucharist, of those resuming strength after the battle; Penance, of those rising from their fall and wounds; Extreme Unction, of those leaving this life; Order, of those governing and in charge of the supplies; Matrimony, of those introducing new soldiers. Thirdly, because they prepare the soul for the seven principal virtues, three theological, and four cardinal. Baptism for faith, Confirmation for hope, Eucharist for Charity, Penance for justice, Extreme Unction for fortitude and perseverance, Order for prudence, Matrimony for temperance.

V. Christ employed the assistance of his disciples who distributed the loaves that the bread should multiply in their

hands. So, also, the Lord instituted the Sacraments that he might use the ministry of men as the instrumental cause in dispensing them, and so that one should administer to another and not to himself. First, to show the leaning of his goodness towards men to whom he communicated this his greatest power, that they should be one with himself as an instrument with a principal cause or author, as a pen with a writer, a brush with a painter, to paint grace in the human heart, which is a certain communication of the divinity. Secondly, that men might by this have a new occasion for deserving well of others, as indicated when in the other banquet spoken of by Matthew, the disciples asked the Lord to send away the people to buy victuals, he replied: "They have no need to go: give you them to eat" (Matt. 14:16). God could have conferred sufficient wealth on each man, but he wished to give some less, and some more, so that the rich would have an occasion of being blessed by the poor, and the poor an occasion for praying for the rich. Thirdly, that there might exist a reason why men should be bound together in mutual love, since they understand that good only such as divine grace can be communicated to them by men, ministers of the Sacraments; the grace of Confirmation and Order by Bishops; grace of Penance, Eucharist and Extreme Unction by Priests; grace of Baptism by any one in case of necessity. Hence they acknowledge themselves debtors; they revere and love them; they fear to offend them,—because they look on them as fathers no less than parents in the flesh. St. Paul says: "For if you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus by the gospel I have begotten you" (1 Cor. 4:15). Fourthly, that we might gather from this that the virtue and efficacy of the Sacraments are so great that they cannot be impeded even by unworthy ministers, as long as they duly administer them. The Lord knew that there would be many wicked dispensers of the Mysteries; he by no means would have conferred that power if the virtue of the Sacraments depended on their lives. If they were to be administered by angels or holy men only, sanctification would be ascribed rather to their sanctity than to the efficacy of the Sacraments. As an expert penman takes up any pen and nevertheless writes well, so that it is his art that is praised, not his pen, so God wished to act in this case. Sacraments are called signs and seals. "If on two rings,"

says St. Gregory Nazianzen, "one gold and one iron, the same image be engraved, they will both make the same impression. So the same sanctification is conferred through the Sacrament administered by the golden priest remarkable for sanctity as that administered by the unworthy one."

VI. Christ conferred a twofold virtue on those loaves : one of appeasing hunger, the other of restoring strength to the exhausted ; so also the Sacraments confer a twofold virtue. First, the virtue of banishing sin and partly its remains, or the punishment due to them. Secondly, the virtue of bringing grace to the soul, of preserving and increasing to certain determined acts. As Eliseus so prodigiously multiplied the widow's oil, which she had in a certain vessel, that she was able to fill other vessels brought her, to pay her creditors and to live comfortably with her sons ; so also Christ multiplied the Sacraments for us, that through them we could pay the debts of our sins ; and then to cherish the life of grace in us.

Therefore, it remains for us to see that vessels for receiving oil be not wanting, lest it stand. The oil of that grace which the Sacraments give is always in the Church as long as there are men disposed to receive it. Alas, how few now are the vessels empty of worldly cares and secular pursuits ! How infrequent the use of the Sacraments ! Since the Sacraments are such holy and precious things, let us learn to treat them with the deepest reverence and honor, not only in our hands but also in our mouths. What madness then is it to desecrate the Sacraments, which should be our means of salvation. Is this not to destroy the bridge over which we must cross to escape our enemies ? Is it not to tie a rope around the neck to prevent breathing ? Is it not to close the gates of heaven ? As often as we hear the name of a Sacrament, we should fall on our knees and give thanks to God for those loaves of bread left us in the Church ; and let us ask him to give us a spiritual hunger and desire for them that we may partake of them more fervently and more worthily than we have heretofore.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THOSE WHO WILL SAY TO GOD IN VAIN: "LORD, LORD."

I. Such are heretics. II. Christians who by voice confess Christ: by deed deny him. III. Who do not complete their good desires. IV. Whose whole devotion is in external works.

"Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 7 ; 21.)

It is customary among civilized nations in receiving a guest to not only salute him by word of mouth but also to extend him the hand. This was observed by Jehu, the King of Israel who on his way to destroy Baal and his priests, met Jonadab and said to him: "Is thy heart right as my heart is with thy heart? And Jonadab said: it is. If it be, said he, give me thy hand. He gave him his hand. And he lifted him up into the chariot. And he said to him: come with me and see my zeal for the Lord" (4 Kings 10 : 15, 16).

Mystically Jehu signifies Christ the Son of God who will come from heaven to judgment, to destroy sin and its followers. When we all shall go to meet him, he will ask us if we love him as he himself has loved us.

He will, by no means, be content with a vocal assertion alone, because as we read in the text: "Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." He will ask for the hand, that is, true and sincere work by which we shall really and sincerely prove our love towards him. He adds: "If any one do the will of my Father," etc. And then he will lift us up into the chariot of his glory ; not otherwise. Therefore, before we go to meet Christ, let us ask ourselves how we will face him.

"Before judgment, examine thyself, and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God" (Eccl. 18 : 20). Those who do not rightly appear before God shall say in vain, "Lord, Lord,"

I. Such are the Lutherans and Calvinists, who have a certain kind of confidence they call special, by which they believe they will be surely saved without works, for they believe they have been made partakers of the divine promises of justification and remission of sins. But this confidence is a mere figment, and is destroyed by the words of the text. They are said to have faith in Christ the Lord, and otherwise they are not reprehended unless because they do not the will of the Father; however, the kingdom of heaven is denied to them. Likewise, those who on the day of judgment will say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" they had faith, but not on account of this are they rejected, but because they were "doers of iniquity." And yet they will hear: "I never knew you." Heretics say: Lord, Lord, have you not suffered for us and satisfied for us? are not your passion and merits perfect? but let them hear: was not Christ baptized for us? and yet he should be baptized who wishes to become a partaker of the merits of Christ. I could also say: Did not Christ rise for us and ascend into heaven? therefore it is not necessary for us to rise and ascend. "Heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ, yet so if we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom. 8 : 17).

"He is not crowned unless he strive lawfully. If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Tim. 2 : 5, 11, 13).

Christ is denied not only by words but also by deeds. The reason is, if faith alone and the merits alone of Christ without our co-operation would suffice for salvation, would not Christ encourage idleness in men, nay more, give license and security to commit all kinds of evil? Luther himself writes: "Many, while they heard that so long as they believe all their sins are forgiven them, construct a faith for themselves and think they are clean, by which they become rash and secure; but whose carnal security is worse than any error that existed before this time." However, on this figment, he built his whole gospel and his whole doctrine. What else could we say against him? Although Christ promised us justice, remission of sins, glory; should we not therefore co-operate? Let the ass wiser than Balaam talk; let the body more prudent than the mind talk; let the farmer more learned than the doctor talk. Christ promised us temporal supplies: food, clothing, etc., saying: "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow,

nor do they reap, nor gather into barns : and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they ?" (Matt. 16 : 26). And, therefore, farmers neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, because they know that God has promised them food ? Men certainly are like those heretics of old who condemned labor, and said that food was to be expected from God.

II. Such are bad Christians, who by voice confess to know Christ, and that good works are necessary for salvation, but who deny him in deed. They say, "Lord, Lord," because they think it sufficient to be baptized and confirmed, to be Catholics, to observe the precepts ; they are solicitous about nothing, nor do they strive to offer any good works to God. To these the Lord will justly say : "Not every one," etc. Do we not know what happened to the fig tree which had leaves only and bore no fruit ? Was it not withered by the voice of the Lord ? After three years of barrenness was it not ordered to be cut down ? The Christian devoid of good works is designated by that tree, and who like the fig tree should frequently and constantly produce the fruits of good works by always observing the negative precepts ; the positive ones according to the exigency of time and place. It will not do to merely say : "I am a Christian and a Catholic." If the Roman censors, by chance, found any idler in the city, they asked him what art he followed ; they examined his hands to see if he were an artisan or a tramp useless to the republic ; if they found him the latter, he was expelled the city. God will do this on the day of judgment with Christians especially ; he will examine their hands, that is, their works. "I was hungry and you did not give me to eat," etc. Nor will he be content with a naked confession of faith which we carry with us as the instrument of art. Those workmen carried their tools with them, yet they heard the words : "Why stand ye here all the day idle ?" When they were to be paid, "call the laborers," said the lord, not the idle ones ; nor would he pay them for merely walking around the vineyard. If they had not labored for the lord but for themselves, they would not have been paid ; so also unless we labor for God and seek the things that are Christ's, by no means will we be workers of God. Certainly the laborers whom you send into your field must work steadily or you will not pay them. And how can we be called workers of God who spend nearly the whole week in our own affairs and

scarcely give a single hour to divine things? It is a burden to spend one half-hour hearing Mass; we are bored by sermons; we are satisfied with approaching the Sacraments once or twice a year; on feast days we never think of giving extra time to prayer. And we think the Lord will reward us when we say to him: "Lord, Lord, we have always labored; we have struggled to educate our children; we have prepared food and clothing in the sweat of our brow, etc." St. Jerome writes of himself that, in the midst of his vigils and fasts, he found time to read the works of Cicero and Plato, and being brought in spirit to the tribunal of Christ, he was asked his profession, and answered: "I am a Christian." "You lie," said the Judge, "You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian, for where your treasure is there also is your heart." On hearing this, he did great penance and so obtained pardon for his offense.

If this man, otherwise pleasing to God, was so treated on account only of his greed for study of profane authors, what can be said of those who give all their time to the study of secular gains and pursuits? How can they ask reward from God? "He who does not labor, neither let him eat," says the Apostle.

III. Such are those who often have the pious desire of avoiding sin, of doing penance, of working well, and who lean to God and virtue, but who never effectively propose, nor in fact cultivate, God and piety. Many, often during sermons, while reading pious books, in sickness and affliction, make the strongest resolutions to avoid this or that vice, to do this or that good work, to confess that sin so long hidden, to restore stolen goods, to enter religion, etc. All these say: "Lord, Lord, we are ready to obey you, we will do what you require of us, only have patience with us and we will pay you all." But in the meantime they do not execute what they resolved: they are like a painted runner who seems to run, but does not advance one step, because he never raises the other foot, that is, of execution. Job says of these: "The wing of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron and of the hawk" (39 : 3). These birds fly very high, and he tries to fly, but, on account of his size and weight, he can only run along the ground. Such are those who wish and desire to serve God, to follow piety, to shun vice, but who are restrained by cares, pleasures and riches. Balaam was such an ostrich who at first prayed well for the Israelites, but con-

quered by the occasion of gain taken away, which he before had despised, he persisted in his obstinacy and malice. He said: "Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them" (Israelites) (Num. 23:10). But in the meantime he did not strive to live well with the Israelites; nay more, those whom he had praised by word of mouth he destroyed by bad advice. A certain prince, when asked his opinion of Calvinists and Catholics, replied that he preferred to live with the Calvinists, but to die with the Catholics; because the death of the latter is more secure, while the life of the former is more voluptuous. But he should have said: Since I prefer to die with the Catholics, I prefer to live with them, for a good death depends on a good life; it is impossible for him to die well who lives badly. Balaam should have said more prudently: "Let my soul live the life of the just, that it may die the death of the just." Truly those who live a pious life will die a pious death; and the contrary also is true. There are some Catholics who wish to die with the just but who do not live with the just in frequenting the Sacraments, observing the Sabbath, etc. They make strong resolutions when it is too late; they should have made them effectively sooner. "You shall begin to stand without and knock at the door, saying: "Lord, open to us: and he answering shall say to you, I know you not whence you are" (Luke 13:25).

IV. Such are those whose entire devotion consists in external works: hearing mass and sermons, giving alms, making pilgrimages, etc.; about internal works: how they will get rid of their vices, how conquer themselves, how mortify their depraved appetites; they have no anxiety, since, however, these are more difficult and more necessary. Such were the Pharisees whom the Lord rebuked saying: "Woe to you Pharisees because you tithe mint and rue and every herb: and pass over judgment and the charity of God. Now these things you ought to have done, and not to leave the others undone" (Luke 11:42). It was of little profit to that Pharisee who said: "I fast twice on the Sabbath, I give a tenth part" etc; and who in the meantime did not conquer his pride. For, as it is of more account for the cup to be clean on the inside than to be gilded on the outside, so God requires much more that we purge our heart from vice, and conquer ourselves, than that we should perform external works, while at the same time we are wedded to sin. The

reason is, because charity is the foundation on which the walls of good works should be erected. Therefore he who simply prays, fasts, gives alms, etc., and does not strive to uproot his vices is like the house built on sand—"and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell, and great was the fall thereof (Matt. 7 : 27). All those trees were bad or useless. The first were barren ; the second gave forth leaves only ; those that gave flowers and no fruit, those that bore fruit but of little use. Of all these it is said : "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire" (Matt. 7 : 19) ; and from this judgment may the Lord preserve us !

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

WASTING THE GOODS OF GOD.

I. The goods of the mind: supernatural; science and learning; honor and esteem. II. Goods of the body: form and beauty; strength and health; life. III. Goods of fortune: dignity and power; nobility; riches; fruits of the earth.

"And the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods."
(Luke 16 : 1.)

I DO not doubt that if an Angel of God, coming to us, would say that some one is squandering the goods of God, who shortly will be called to judgment, we would all tremble. So also the Apostles when Christ said to them: "One of you will betray me"; all trembled and looked at one another as though each one suspected himself saying: "Is it I?" In to-day's gospel the Lord clearly indicates that many such men are found who waste the goods of God. Will I or this one or that one be found such? What shall we do when we hear the Lord commanding: "Render an account of your stewardship?" Let each one study in time and examine himself whether he is such as we see in the gospel cited before the tribunal and deposed from office, lest at some time the same thing happen to him also.

I. There are three kinds of goods which man has received from God: goods of mind, of body and of fortune. To the goods of mind belong first, the supernatural, as grace. This certainly they waste who by sinning expel it from themselves. Insane was that prodigality of Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, who, through pride and haughtiness, took from her ear a great and most costly pearl, and having dissolved it in a bowl of vinegar, consumed it. But this is nothing to the prodigality of the sinner who by one taste of sin wastes and consumes grace, the ornament of the soul and the price of a heavenly kingdom. Who will not be incensed at such

a squanderer? Cleopatra took the other pearl and was about to do the same with it, but was restrained by Lucius Plancus, who was enraged at such extravagance. And we do not strive to prevent ourselves or our neighbors from sin. Secondly, science and learning. They waste this good who do not use it for their own or others' benefit. As he loses gold who buries it in the earth, so also he loses science who communicates it to no one. Hence the wise man says: "Wisdom that is hid and treasure that is not seen: what profit is there in them both?" (Eccl. 20: 32.) How much sweat is used to heap up a treasure! how much labor to acquire science! What malice therefore to abuse both! Those men are like the stags of Epirus which, as Aristotle says, through envy or sloth, hide in the ground the right horn endowed with physical strength. This horn is science, which one through sloth or envy hides from others, and who as its squanderer will render an account to God; for those who, by habitual drunkenness, destroy science and learning become useless to themselves and others. What benefit is it to build a merchant-ship if, after it is launched, you sink it? What benefit to have acquired science at very great expense if, when you should communicate it to your neighbor, you bury it in sloth and drunkenness? Secondly, those who use it for evil, fraud, vanity, self-praise, vain-glory and to the detriment of others. Rightly has it been said: "Science without the fear of God is as a sword in the hand of a madman." Thirdly, honor and esteem, whose squanderers are those who live at their ease and care not what others think of them; unmindful of the words of the wise man: "Take care of a good name." We know that Judas was indignant because Mary Magdalene poured a most precious ointment on the Lord; he would have reason to be if she had poured it on the earth. But a much more unworthy thing it is if a good name is wasted. "A good name is better than precious ointments" (Eccles. 7). In the second chapter of the Canticle of Canticles we read that Christ the spouse of our souls feeds among lilies. "Lilies excel not only by their whiteness but also by their odor," says St. Bernard. Such should be the Christian, also excelling by the whiteness of his conscience and the odor of a good name: "We owe our conscience to God and our good name to our neighbor," says St. Bernard. So Judas did not say badly that the ointment should be given to the poor, for the odor of a good

name is necessary for those especially who are poor in virtue. Secondly, those who live sordidly and shamelessly, and who defile their name by public scandals. Those, in a manner, give their souls to the devil and all manner of crimes. He who would destroy the hedge around his garden or the walls around his city, would be considered as laying waste the garden and city themselves. This he does, who wastes a good name. A good name is the guardian of virtue and honesty, and this taken away, the entrance to the soul is open for all vices whatsoever.

II. The goods of the body are first, form and beauty. These are wasted by those who use them for lasciviousness, and who seek after vile pleasures and vain-glory; no less than those who would cast an elegant picture into the mire. Hence Solomon says: "A gold ring in a swine's snout, a woman fair and foolish" (Prov. 11 : 22). A pig rooting in the ground, soils the gold ring in his snout; so a foolish woman indulging in vice destroys the beauty of form received from God, and which she could possess with grace and dignity. Secondly, strength and health. They waste this good who do not use it wisely, in things pleasing to God and beneficial to themselves and others; but for seeking vanity, ostentation, etc. Hence they deserve to be deprived of it by God; by taking away their gifts from those not using them. "Take the pound away from him and give it to him that hath the ten pounds" (Luke 19 : 24). Secondly, those who destroy it by inordinate freedom of life, by idleness, delights, drunkenness, etc. By these daggers very many wound themselves. Thirdly, life. They waste this who, without reason, place themselves in manifest danger, as fighters, crazy drinkers and suicides. Again, those who do not strive to preserve their lives, as those in dangerous sickness do not consult a doctor for fear of his making his charge too high. It is a cruel avarice which wishes to lose rather life than money, and does not allow the possessor to use the necessary means for preserving it. "There is also another evil, which I have seen and that frequent among men: "A man to whom God hath given riches and substance and honor . . . yet God doth not give him power to eat thereof" (Eccles. 6 : 12). Hence good men did not count the years of their life unless those which they had spent well; as Barlaam answered Josaphat, who asked him how old he was. He said he was forty-five, although a septuagenarian;

because he had lived only forty-five years for God. The epitaph of Hadrian Similius read: "Here lies H. S., who led a long life, but lived only seven years." These only he had lived well. How much do they waste who spend the whole time of life in the pursuit of vanity! Titus, when on any night he remembered that he had done nothing good that day, was accustomed to say: "To-day I have lost a day." We do not think we lose a day, days or years when we speak an idle word, etc. Do not merchants who give themselves up to sport during business hours lose much profit? This they do who do not devote the short time of life to God, who gather no merits for themselves, and who do not repent of past offenses.

III. Among the goods of fortune are named first, dignity and power, which good those waste who do not use it when there is need. Magistrates received a sword, but while they did not unsheath it, they allowed it to become rusty. Of these Jeremias says: "Cursed be he that withholdeth his sword from blood" (48:10). So the magistrate who does not justly punish delinquents, makes them worse, and brings their crimes on themselves, for which they will be accountable to God. Secondly, those who abuse this good, for luxury, pride, rapine, contempt and oppression of the poor. They soil and use for tyranny the crown and scepter given them to preserve their lives and to regulate the lives of their subjects. The sword was given them, not that they themselves should be free but to free others, not to wound their subjects but rather to defend them. "Solicitude not dignity, is the office of a prelate," says St. Bernard. "O, shepherd and idol that forsaketh the flock: the sword upon his right arm and upon his right eye" (Zach. 11:17). Such wish to be adored as an idol; and when they should be shepherds, they are butchers, who have the sword in hand, and their eye on the fattened ones as they slay them. So David looked on Bethsabee, and because she pleased him, he sent his ministers to bring her, and they stole her from her husband. So rulers and magistrates use the sword to threaten their subjects, and whatever they see, they want for themselves, whether it be just or not. They should study the lives of their subjects, to be of service to them; on the contrary, they are always planning how to bleed them. Of these it is said: "There is a judgment against you, because you have been a snare to them whom you should have watched over" (Osee 5:1).

Thirdly, riches which are wasted in various ways. First, when one lives more extravagantly than he can afford and beyond his station in life; and especially, when money is spent for unlawful purposes. Secondly, when one shares with those he should not; when one is liberal towards wicked rather than towards honest people; towards strangers, rather than poor and needy friends and relations; towards intemperate rather than temperate; towards rich rather than poor; towards horses and dogs, rather than suffering humanity. Thirdly, when something is given which should not be given; something harmful and dangerous, though by accident it was promised. Truly Agesilaus said: "If it is just what you ask, I promised it; if it is unjust, I did not promise it." Fourthly, when they are not bestowed discreetly; when everything is given to one person and nothing to others, and this without reason or advice. Fifthly, with a bad intention for the sake of receiving human praise; with the design of receiving equally as much if not more; of obtaining a higher office. In these and like ways, they sow in water whatever they scatter and more so waste it. "Amen, I say to you, you have received your reward." Sixthly, when they are shared with no one, but are hidden away through a miserly spirit of avarice. *Fourthly*, those waste the fruits of the earth, who use them immoderately in luxury and intemperance. These are like ducks that are not satisfied to drink from the vessel, but must plunge in and take a bath. Secondly, those who hide them from the poor who are in need of assistance; and for this reason they are often punished, and the fruits themselves destroyed by worms or fire or other cause. To all these, God says through Osee: "I gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold which they have used in the service of Baal" (2:8). Whoever wastes the goods of God do this, for they sacrifice them to the devil, the world and the flesh, and when they shall appear before the judgment seat of God, they shall hear: "Render an account of your stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer."

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE DEATH OF THE SINNER.

I. Enemies shall surround him: by frightening him with specters; by assailing with temptations; by assailing with sins committed. II. They shall straighten him on all sides. III. They shall beat him flat to the ground: because he will be taken away by violence; because he has forgotten spiritual things; because he is urged to despair. IV. Nor shall they leave a stone upon a stone: because he will be despoiled of his goods; he will be deprived of the fruit of works done without grace; his vows will amount to nothing.

"For the days shall come upon thee" (Luke 19 : 43).

It seems that many no more fear to-day's gospel than an exploded bomb or an empty rifle. They think that the preaching and the warning of Christ is already complete with the Jews, and does not pertain to others. Whence, they seem to say: "these days shall not come upon us." Yet we clearly see those things, which in the gospel are predicted of the impenitent Jews, are predicted also of those dying in sin, and hence this gospel is a twofold prophecy: one which relates to the Jews, the other to all sinners. For as the destruction of Jerusalem is a type of the annihilation of sinners; so it is understood that those things which literally happened to Jerusalem will spiritually happen to man dying in the state of sin. Let us examine each one separately.

I. "Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round." This happened to the Jews because they were surrounded by the Roman army and encompassed by a wall and trench. The devils will do this to the dying sinner. First, by frightening him with cruel and horrid specters, in the form of dragons, lions, serpents, etc. Sinners who led beastly lives, and clothed themselves with the vices of beasts, are justly terrified by the devils with the forms of atrocious and horrible beasts, so that they behold with their eyes what they were and what they adored. Secondly, by assaulting

them with temptations and stimulating them by the scourges of worldly affairs so that they will not have time to think of their salvation. For as the Hebrews were then especially crushed by Pharao with labors and stripes when they wished to depart from him and sacrifice to God; and as when the drivers of horses on nearing the goal urge their steeds with whip and spur; so when sinners are nearing the goal of life, then especially are they bitterly assaulted by the devil, who then comes down to them, "having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Apoc. 11 : 12). And Christ enlarges this by saying: "Thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round." Thirdly, by laying before them sins committed and exaggerating them from their multitude, their foulness and ingratitude and constant repetition. The sins, which in the beginning the devil persuades and makes light of, in the end, when one is about to die, he aggravates so as to lead him to despair. He shows him sins surrounding him on all sides, tells him there is no hope of escape and thus easily fills him with despair. This is what David feared when he said: "Why shall I fear in the evil-day? The iniquity of my heel shall accompany me" (Ps. 48 : 6); that is, if in the hour of death, I shall find my sins around me, they will surround me like a wall and there will be no chance for escape. This wall the devil shall build from the multitude of sins which one has committed. Of that figuratively, of Nabuchodonosor literally, Habacuc speaks: "And he shall laugh at every stronghold, and shall cast up a mount and shall take it" (Tyre 1 : 10). As many vices as one has committed, with so many trenches shall the demons surround the unfortunate one; and as though already conquered and taken they shall rejoice over him.

II. "They shall straiten thee on all sides."—This happened to Jerusalem; it was straitened on the outside by the Romans, and inside by famine, pestilence, rapine and seditions, so that there was no escape. This will happen to the dying reprobate. Job very well describes the perplexities of the dying sinner when he says: "The lamp of the wicked shall be put out and a deluge come upon them" (21 : 17). For as before the deluge all the bound-up waters were held in the clouds, in the abyss of the sea and in fountains lest they should injure men who therefore traveled freely all the paths of sin; suddenly, however, the deluge came, and from everywhere most copious waters flowed; from the heavens, earth,

sea and fountains, and crushed men on all sides ; so, while the sinner lives, he freely goes along and rejoices in his possessions ; but, when he approaches the gates of death, then from all sides the most copious waters of grief and anxiety rush upon him. Wherever he looks, he can see no escape, find no defender. If he looks up he sees an angry God offended thousands of times ; if he looks down, he sees hell, that bottomless pit yawning for his soul ; if he looks into himself, he sees the worm of conscience gnawing and accusing; if he looks outside, he sees friends and relatives filled with sorrow at the thought of parting, sometimes troublesome and importuning for a share of his goods, and very often hindering him on the road to salvation. He sees all the goods he must leave behind. Around him everywhere are the hosts of demons, ensnaring him and waiting for the departure of his soul, like cats watching for their prey to appear. Before him he sees death, too, suddenly approaching. There he will cast his eyes on the tomb which he will be forced to enter. Behind him is the judgment, severe and uncertain, in which he will pay all his debts to God, which he contracted in this world by gluttony, pleasures and riotous living. If Baltassar, on seeing the handwriting on the wall, though unintelligible to him, so trembled that his face was changed and his knees knocked together, how will he feel who sees already the final sentence to be written against him, sees himself already in the balance and in one side so much weight of sin placed against him ? And this is the sad and dark time of which Ecclesiastes speaks : "If a man live many years and have rejoiced in them all, he must remember the darksome time and the many days which, when they shall come, the things passed shall be accused of vanity" (11 : 8). No one is certain that he will live many years, nor can he be always happy in them, who is not sure of the morrow. Can one sentenced to death be happy for a moment ? Grant that a man live a long and happy life, he should, however, remember "the darksome time and the many days ;" that is, death whose time is short though it seems long on account of its straitness and that which follows eternity. That will be a darksome time because it will be filled with sadness whether you consider the senses and pains of the body, friends or relatives or counseling priests ; because it is a doubtful exit. The sinner sees himself standing and knocking at the gates of heaven or the gates of hell. What darkness ! what griefs !

III. "They shall beat thee and thy children flat to the ground."—This happened to Jerusalem because, not only the buildings in it were overthrown, but its people were either destroyed by pestilence or killed or led into captivity. The same happens to the dying sinner. First, because unwillingly forced with great violence he severs the ties of life and is laid in the grave; because he was strongly bound to the world like a lofty tree, which fixes its powerful roots deep in the earth and is not destroyed by the storm without great violence and resistance. O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions! Because he did not think beforehand about death, and seeing it now before him he is astonished and dismayed; like stuck pigs frightfully grunting and groaning because they feel death coming. So that fat and trembling king, Agag, ordered by Samuel to be put to death, said: "Doth bitter death separate in this manner?" (1 Kings 15:32). And so he who thought only of life is suddenly cast into the grave. But with what swiftness will he be hurled into hell! Satan himself fell like lightning from heaven, so will his followers fall into hell. Secondly, because all his thoughts are turned to earthly matters: the intenseness of his malady, his wife and children, his will, doctors, medicine, etc., he forgets spiritual things. "He is so taken up with worldly things that when dying he forgets himself, who while living forgot his God," says St. Augustine. It often happens that then he reviews the charms of those sins in which, when well, he took great delight. The proud and vain, when dying, wish to be decked with all their jewels; the misers and avaricious tenaciously clutch their gold in the clammy grasp of death; the powerful and ambitious issue their accustomed orders, not knowing that they will be obeyed for the last time. Is not this to be beaten to the ground? Thirdly, because he is urged to despair, either by evil spirits, or by his own crimes, with his thoughts arousing and exciting his soul. Despair is secure which entirely destroys the tree, and by one blow hurls it to earth. Thus acted Julian the apostate, when taking the blood from his wound, he cast it towards heaven, crying out: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" Calvin, when dying of a loathsome disease, invoked the devil, blaspheming God.

IV. "Nor shall they leave in thee a stone upon a stone." This happened to Jerusalem, because it was destroyed by Titus and afterwards entirely blotted out and moved from its

site by Adrian. This happens in the death of the wicked. First, he is despoiled of all his goods and fortunes in which he reveled, and there is nothing left him but a winding sheet. St. Mark narrates that one time when Jesus was leaving the temple, which he had predicted would be destroyed in three days, one of his disciples pointing to that magnificent pile said: "Master, behold what manner of stones and what buildings are here" (Mark 13 : 1). St. Luke adds that he called to mind the goodly stones and gifts which adorned it, and which should not be destroyed. But what did Christ answer? "These things which you see the days will come in which there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down" (Luke 21 : 6). This happened to the temple, not figuratively but truly, first, under Adrian, then under Julian, for the Jews, wishing to rebuild it, dug up the old foundations, and then fire came and destroyed it entirely. This daily happens to dying sinners. See a prince of this world endowed with riches and power, attended by a retinue of servants, arrayed in majesty, glory and splendor. What stones, what a structure! But all these shall be destroyed: wealth, glory, pomp, servants and the very bones of the body so that a bone shall not be left upon a bone. See the adornment, the pride, the vanity, the beauty of woman—all shall be destroyed. The more a sinner delights in those things, the more bitterly shall he feel their loss; and what were before his dearest idols will now be his bitterest cross. The body which he pampered, nourished with delicacies, and clothed with elegance, will now be relegated to the earth; the senses to be closed and composed in perpetual sleep; a dear wife and children to be committed to the care of others; his house and grounds to be left forever. Oh, the bitterness of things formerly so sweet! Secondly, he is deprived of the fruit of his works, whether good or evil, for good works without grace avail nothing for salvation. While the sinner adds usury to usury, drunkenness to drunkenness, pleasure to pleasure, sin to sin, he places a stone upon a stone. While he adds lot to lot, palace to palace, gold to gold, even also moral good works; charity to charity, justice to justice, he places a stone upon a stone, and rears a great structure. But at the hour of death there shall not be left a stone upon a stone; because these shall all crumble; his labors will count for nought. As a stone cut without hands destroyed the statue which Nabuchodonosor had made of gold, silver, brass, clay and

iron, and reduced it to ashes (Dan. 2 : 34) ; so death secretly coming overturns and destroys the whole structure of the sinner which he had built of bad, indifferent and good works. Thirdly, his vows and promises amount to nothing. "I will pull down my barns and will build greater : and unto them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul : Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink and make good cheer" (Luke 12 : 18, 19). He built in the air, for on the following night he was dead, and his building vanished. The promise of doing penance, of restoring ill-gotten goods, of avoiding strong drink, of redeeming sins by almsgiving and other works, such promises no doubt the sinner often made or at least conceived when seriously ill : If I could recover from this sickness, I would change my life ; if only to-morrow were given to me, then I would confess and receive the Sacraments ; then he would prefer a life of penance to one of luxury ; to be hungry with Lazarus and despised by the world rather than to feast with the rich man. Alas, in the hour of death all these will have flown. Since, therefore, we understand that the threats made in to-day's gospel apply not only to the Jews but to each one of us, let us turn our eyes, not to Jerusalem already destroyed, but to the temple of our own bodies soon to be overthrown. And if Christ thought the Jews were to be pitied who, placed in such danger, failed to provide for themselves, are we also not to be pitied who, after so many warnings, do not prepare for our imminent departure and that an eternal one ? If we are wise, let us deplore our sins here lest we be forced to weep in vain forever there, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

DEFECTIVE PRAYER OF THE PHARISEE.

I. He sins by recounting his good works: with an evil purpose; ascribing them to himself; cloaking his boasting; valuing highly things not great. II. Removing sins from himself; not accusing himself; removing grave ones only; those only by which his neighbor is offended; not acknowledging his hidden sins. III. By comparing himself with the publican; rashly judging his neighbor; accusing the same; despising the same; praising himself above others. IV. The good prayer of the publican.

"The Pharisee, standing, prayed thus with himself" (Luke 18:11).

We discern the wonderful judgment of God in to-day's gospel. St. John Chrysostom says: "The sinner excels the just man, the publican the Pharisee, and words were superior to facts." How were words? The Pharisee says: "I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all I possess." The Pharisee boasted of works of justice; the publican spoke words of modesty, and words availed more than deeds. Such a treasure is rejected with scorn; such poverty is changed into wealth. "There came two ships heavily laden; they both entered port; but the publican sails in safety, while the Pharisee has been shipwrecked." The ship of the Pharisee was great and built with the equipment of good works, yet it was shipwrecked. The ship of the publican was weak and poorly built, and it arrived safe in the port of salvation. "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other." Let us see in what the Pharisee was wanting.

I. He sinned first, because he recounts his good works with a bad end in view, namely, to justify himself. It is not always bad to enumerate one's good works; but it is good and allowable when it is done for the glory of God or

the benefit of our neighbor, as did Job, Ezechiel and Paul. But neither of these urged the Pharisee to recount his works. Agitated, therefore, by mere vanity, he pleased himself in his works as a peacock in the feathers of his tail. For this reason, he stood near the altar as though he were a just man and a friend of God, and this is inferred because the publican alone is said to have stood at the door. Secondly, because he ascribes his works to himself and his own industry. He does not say: "I am not, by your gift of grace, like other men;" as Paul said: "By the grace of God, I am what I am." He looks on gratuitous gifts as owing to him, which is great ingratitude, as if one were to give thanks for a golden vase as though it were silver. This is to kiss the hand, which Job counted the greatest iniquity: "If I have kissed my hand with my mouth, which is a very great iniquity" (32:27). Thirdly, because he cloaks his boasting and elation with the religious garb of thanksgiving, while in the meantime he gives thanks rather to himself than to God. Wherefore, he acts the hypocrite and tries to thrust upon God false money for sound; like that servant of King Totila, who, arrayed in the garments of his master, came to St. Benedict, hoping to deceive him. But the fictitious king heard the saint say: "Son, put off what you carry, because it is not yours." By a like scheme all hypocrites adorn themselves, and under strange masks strive to deceive God; but they will one day hear him say: "Put off what you carry, for it is not yours." Certainly he discovered the Pharisee in to-day's gospel and exposed his fraud. They imitate the Pharisees who recount their works, lying meanwhile, that they seek not their own but God's glory. Fourthly, because he lays too much stress on his works and rates them greater than they are. He enumerates only external works, which often contain a disguise, and are not always necessary for salvation; he does not remember the internal works of faith, hope, charity, humility, mercy, etc., which are the principal and necessary ones. The devil easily tolerates external works, so that by them you may become proud and rest secure in sin. The works coming from a bad workshop, namely, vainglory, do not merit praise, but rather confusion. Then he recounted only two works: "I fast twice in a week, and I give tithes of all I possess," as though in these alone consisted perfection. Where is almsgiving, the other wing of prayer? Where the other works? And

so many attend to external works only and neglect internal; they do not heed whether they perform them with good or bad intention. Finally, as long as they perform one work or another, they fulfil one or another precept; they count themselves already just, not hearing the Lord saying: "It is necessary to do this and not to omit that." St. Gregory says: "The Pharisee by elation opened the city of his heart to the besiegers, which he closed in vain by fasting and almsgiving. The others are fortified in vain while there is one place not fortified, where there is an opening for the enemy."

II. He sinned, because in no way does he accuse himself, as though he were entirely innocent. Solomon says: "The just is first accuser of himself" (Prov. 18 : 17). Hence the same Solomon prescribed this form of prayer: "We have sinned, we have done unjustly, we have committed wickedness" (3 Kings 8 : 47). The holy men Daniel, Azarias and Baruch used the same formula. Beggars travel in tattered garments and expose their wounds to excite pity. Could they do this if they were dressed in style and wore jewelry? This the Pharisee did who, while he should recount his miseries to obtain relief from God, recounts his good works. Secondly, because he removes from himself only grave sins: rapine, injustice, adultery; he cares not for the lighter ones, nor does he seek to profit by the example of his betters. "But, let every one prove his own work, and so he shall have glory in himself only, and not in another" (Galat. 6 : 4). The sense of this, according to St. Hilary, is: "You consider yourself spiritual and are stronger by the infirmity of another; you should not consider the weakness of one lying down, but your strength." An athlete, therefore, is not strong because he conquers a weak man, but if he be robust; and he glories in his own strength, not in the weakness of another. Therefore, the Pharisee was not immediately just and pleasing to God because he was not unjust and an adulterer. Some swiftly hasten to hell, others step by step. It is enough for the hunter if he holds the falcon by one foot, although the other is free; so it is enough for the devil to know that you are held by one, even though light, mortal sin. Wherefore, the apostle advises us to consider, "not the things which are behind, but those that are before." Thirdly, he cleanses himself from those sins only by which he offends his neighbor; he does not remember those by which God is offended, and he counts them as nothing. So

also those who do not fear God, but men only, count and heed those sins only which injure their neighbor. The injuries done to God they heed not. On this account the Lord reprehended the Pharisees who said: "Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but he that shall swear by the gold of the temple is a debtor" (Matt. 23:16). For it was the custom among the Jews for rich and poor to place their goods in the temple, as the safest place. Therefore to swear by this gold of their neighbors was a grave crime; to swear by the temple of God was nothing. But what did the Lord say to these? "Ye foolish and blind: for whether is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?" Which is greater, to offend a servant, or a king, man or God? Fourthly, he does not pray God to remit those other sins, which he does not discover in himself. The most holy men, even though they could find no sin in themselves, nevertheless feared lest they should be attached to hidden ones. Holy David, when he said to God that he observed the commandments, with fear added: "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord: and from those of others spare thy servant" (Ps. 18:13). He corrects himself as though to say: I said that I observe thy commandments, but how much does human frailty suffer. "For I am not conscious to myself of anything, yet I am not here justified" (1 Cor. 4:4). St Basil says: "Since we may offend in many things, we do not understand the greater part of our offenses," and therefore, the apostle said: "I am not conscious to myself." He concludes finally that you will not lie if you call yourself a sinner. This is what the Pharisee should have adverted to.

III. He sins because he rashly judges his neighbor. He accuses the publican and others of rapine, injustice and adultery; which things are known only to the searcher of hearts. Wherefore, by a twofold reason, he constitutes himself a robber. First, because he arrogates to himself what belongs to God: to know the ways of man. Secondly, because without cause he, in his heart, steals esteem from his neighbor. Even though he had seen nothing good in the publican, he should not think evil of him; and more so when he saw that he had come to the temple. He should think that he had come there to ask pardon of God for his sins. What perversity to draw evil from good signs! "Wherefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that

judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest" (Rom. 2 : 11). You call the publican a robber, and you are a twofold robber. Secondly, because he accuses his neighbor before God, imitating the devil "the accuser of our brothers," who accuses men in the sight of God. Nay, he is worse than the devil, for the devil does not accuse his own brothers, but ours only. Although God highly detests sin, however, he wishes us rather to excuse the sins of others than to accuse them, as Christ did on the cross, praying for his murderers: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Thirdly, because he despises his neighbor when he says: "As also is this publican." This is a common fault with the proud. "Whilst the wicked man is proud, the poor is set on fire" (Ps. 9 : 21); that is, the wicked man says such bitter words about the poor that he seems to cast fire on him. Pride is called smoke by David. "The pride of them that hate thee ascendeth continually" (Ps. 73 : 23). As smoke expels men from buildings, so pride vexes and afflicts the neighbor; so that it is difficult to live under the same roof with a proud man. The proud man is not content like smoke to ascend above others, he must also vex and despise them. So the Pharisee was not satisfied with lauding himself, he must besides despise the poor publican. Agar was not satisfied with being pregnant, she must laud it over her mistress—for, seeing herself with child, "she despised her mistress" (Gen. 16 : 4). So Phenenna upbraided the sterility of Anna (1 Kings 1 : 6). What was the reason Goliath did not draw his sword against David? Scripture says that David drew the sword from the scabbard of the prostrate Goliath. Goliath, presuming on his strength, despised David and thought him unworthy his steel. And so the proud do not deign to notice their inferiors, to speak or to walk with them. Fourthly, he praises himself above others as though he were better than all. "I am not as other men," etc.; in this very saying, by arrogance, he makes himself like them. Isaias says of the proud: "And the unicorns shall go down with them" (34 : 7). With the vile and abject into hell. The proud are called unicorns, because like them they travel alone, rearing aloft their heads and declining the company of others; so the proud do not wish to be among men but above them; they wish to have everything below them, nothing on a level. David prayed;

"Save me from the lion's mouth, and my lowness from the horns of unicorns" (Ps. 21 : 22). Him whom the devil in no other way can conquer, he conquers by esteem, and strikes him with the horns of unicorns. The Pharisee, who could not be conquered by luxury and rapine, is conquered by pride. "Be not lifted up on high," warns the Lord.

IV. We saw what happened to the ship of the Pharisee; let us briefly see what happened to the ship of the publican. He did not recount any of his merits, his humility, his modesty, his penance, nor any other good work done before. He stands in the background. He confesses himself a sinner; he ascribes his sins to himself, not to another, and therefore he strikes his breast and for shame does not dare lift up his eyes. He does not compare himself with the Pharisee, much less does he place himself before him; he stands behind him; he does not judge rashly of him. And "this man went down into his house justified rather than the other." The Pharisee with Simon Magus soared aloft and was hurled to the earth; the publican crawling on the ground was exalted. The former was shipwrecked; the latter sailed safely into port. Therefore, let us avoid the ship of the Pharisee and go into the ship of the publican, which will bring us securely into the haven of eternal rest.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

MEANS FOR CURBING THE TONGUE.

I. Avoid the crowd. II. Consider what you say. III. Remember that your tongue is the bearer of the Eucharist. IV. Beg this grace from God, and note that he is everywhere present. V. Consider the destruction of the tongue. VI. Firmly resolve to guard the tongue.

"And they wonder, saying: he hath done all things well" (Mark 7 : 37).

THE spectators wondered at this miracle in to-day's gospel. We also can wonder, not only because he cured the mute, but also because of the preambles and ceremonies. I do not remember any one cured so laboriously as this mute. Very often by one word Christ healed others; this one he first led from the crowd; then placed his fingers in his ears; then spitting on the earth he touched his tongue, and after these, raising his eyes to heaven, he groaned, and finally restored his voice. Why all these? Was it such a great work to make one not altogether mute, but badly speaking, speak correctly? Certainly Christ found no difficulty in this, but he wished to impress us how difficult it is to correct and curb the tongue that we may never speak badly but correctly. So St. James testifies when he says: "For every nature of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of the rest is tamed by the nature of man: But the tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison" (Epist. 3 : 7, 8). That is, it cannot be tamed without the grace of God, in the same way as God said: No more than a camel could pass through the eye of a needle could a rich man enter heaven without the grace of God. The tongue can be tamed, but not without the grace of God and great labor. The ceremonies which Christ used in curing the mute clearly teach us what we must do to learn to speak correctly.

I. He took the mute from the multitude apart. Go apart

from the multitude therefore, and its tumult, if you do not wish to speak badly. For it is very difficult to see, or hear, many things and not speak of them; the tongue is in the brain, and the mouth of reflection is next it, and what that conceives, is soon brought into the mouth. "At the hearing of a word, the fool is in travail, as a woman groaning in bringing forth a child. As an arrow, that sticketh in a man's thigh; so is a word in the heart of a fool" (Eccli. 19 : 11, 12). The desire for talking is "as new wine which wanteth vent, which bursts the new vessel" (Job 32 : 19). Do you wish not to bring forth from your mouth, an abortive word? See that you do not become heavy with worldly rumors; do not curiously investigate those things which do not pertain to you; avoid especially wicked company, that does not know how to speak properly. For it is difficult to associate with such and not conform to their manners and speech. From the wicked, we learn to speak wickedly; from liars, we learn to lie, from blasphemers, to blaspheme. Passing through a market we seek to buy only what we need and will be useful; so in this world, only those things are to be examined and imitated which are most useful to us.

II. Christ spat on the earth. Spittal signifies wisdom, because as saliva flows from the head and is gathered in the mouth and afterwards ejected—saliva means the taste of salt, and salt means wisdom; so our speech proceeds from the brain or judgment, and should be weighed beforehand, before it is given forth. "Make a balance for thy words" (Eccli. 28 : 29). As gold coin is most carefully weighed so, also, should our words. Four things should especially be considered: what to speak, how to speak, time for speaking, and time for silence. St. Paul tells us what to speak: "Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth—but that which is good to the edification of faith, etc." (Ephes. 4 : 29); also, "Fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: or obscenity, or foolish talking or scurrility, which is to no purpose" (5 : 3, 4). As the sailor has all the dangerous places marked on his chart, so also, the servant of God should take note of all kinds of evil speeches lest he perish in them. In the manner of speaking we must take care not to speak too delicately, inconsiderately, affectedly, curiously, contentiously, not to use too fine language. To speak in time and opportunely has as much grace as to speak out of season

merits hatred. To speak a word in due time is like apples of gold on beds of silver" (Prov. 25 : 11). "A parable coming out of a fool's mouth shall be rejected: for he doth not speak it in due season" (Eccli. 20 : 22). The end or the intention of speech must be looked after, namely, the glory of God, and the benefit of our neighbor. Vainglory and hypocrisy should be shunned. Besides these it is well to note the place and with whom you talk. All these require saliva—salt of wisdom of which the apostle speaks : "Let your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt" (Colloss. 4 : 6). As we dip food in salt, so should the tongue be dipped in reason. He who does not observe this is often and gravely delinquent. Jephte, judge of the Hebrews, discovered this when he hastily vowed to immolate to God the first one whom he should meet outside his house. His only daughter met him, and then he gave way to violent grief, saying: "Alas, my daughter, I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I can do no other thing" (Judges 11 : 35). Herod saw this when he promised the dancing-girl whatever she should ask. Afterwards he was grieved when he saw that she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Therefore, as one about to leave the house looks to see that everything about him is in proper shape so the one about to speak should see that his words are fit and decorous. St. Augustine says : "As you choose what you eat, so, also, choose what you speak."

III. He touched the tongue of the mute. And you, O Christian ! that you may learn to tame your tongue, think how often it has been touched by Christ in Holy Communion. For your tongue is the vehicle, the royal chariot in which Christ comes to you. How can we make this chariot of the King of Heaven the chariot of the devil, to carry and utter blasphemies and perjuries ?

IV. He looked up to heaven, showing that the gift of right speaking was expected from heaven. If you wish to tame your tongue, look up to heaven and fervently, with David, beseech God : "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth : and a door round about my lips" (Ps. 140:3). In which place he asks two gifts of the Holy Ghost necessary for right speaking: the gift of counsel, that he may know what, when and how to speak ; the gift of fortitude, that he may dare to speak what he should and fear to speak what he should not. The first he asks when he asks a guard ; the second when he asks for a door. For these two are mutually

necessary to protect the house. Without a guard, the door will be either always closed or always open. Without a door, the guard cannot prevent people from coming and going. That it is most difficult to tame the tongue we have heard already from St. James, who did not hesitate to say, "No man can conquer the tongue," because man from his vitiated nature is most prone to talkativeness, to self-praise, to defaming, judging and detracting his neighbor; and because great prudence is necessary for speaking rightly, and for this the aid of God should be sought. St. Augustine says: "Let us understand that since no man can conquer his tongue, we must have recourse to God, who conquers our tongue." To conquer animals man is sought; to conquer man let God be sought. And unless the special help of God were required to rule the tongue, the wise man would not have said: "It is the part of man to prepare the soul: and of the Lord to govern the tongue" (Prov. 16:1). Look up to heaven, that is, consider that God is everywhere present and most attentively listening to all your words. The old philosophers taught to so speak with men as if the gods were listening. Let Christians observe this and they will say nothing wicked.

V. He groaned, considering into how many evils the tongue precipitates man. The ungoverned tongue is a horse without a bridle, a ship without a rudder, as St. James says in his epistle where he speaks of four things of the evil tongue. First, the tongue, a small member, exploits great things, it boasts. This is the tongue of the flatterer when it elevates superiors and makes them higher than they really are; the tongue of the calumniator and detractor, which makes the small vices of our neighbor great and the great ones greater; the lying tongue, the quarrelsome tongue, murmuring tongue, etc., which makes an elephant out of a fly. Such is the tongue of the serpent: "You will be as gods;" the tongue of the young man instigating Roboam to oppress his subjects; the tongue of Job's wife: "Curse God and die." But the evil tongue destroys the speaker himself, as Cain, the builders of Babel, the young Amalecite, Sennacharib, etc. Secondly, the tongue of fire is a universe of iniquity, because it fills with its iniquity the universe, all states, towns, cities, villages and dwellings; because it is vile and a conciliator of iniquity. For all iniquities are either perfected or advised by the tongue, or defended or excused, because it wages war against all—God, the angels, saints, just

men, irrational creatures, the Word of God, sacraments, cross of Christ, his passion, blood, wounds, all virtues, heaven and the elements ; then because, like a university, it teaches all iniquities as a university teaches all sciences. Thirdly, the tongue stains the whole body because it stains the whole man with a foul odor of lewdness, strifes, wounds and infamy as a fire blackens everything which it burns. And as the murmuring tongue of Mary, the sister of Moses, covered her with leprosy, so the evil tongue of murmurers afflicts the whole man ; the heart thinks evil of the neighbor ; the ears do not admit his prayers and excuses ; the eyes behold him grievously ; the tongue does not defend his innocence ; it hides virtue ; the nose does not smell his good name and laudable life ; the hands give him nothing, arrange nothing, procure nothing. Fourthly, it inflames the circle of our birth ; that is, the entire course of our life in the same way that hot-iron tires affect wheels when they encompass them. So the evil tongue occupies the whole course of life. Some vices affect certain periods of life : petulance, childhood ; sensuality, youth ; ambition, middle life ; avarice, old age ; all, however, grow old and die with man ; but the vice of the tongue occupies the whole life. For lies, detractions, immodest speeches, murmurs, derisions, trifles, etc., are heard as well from old as from young. Finally, it inflames and burns man in hell, as is evident from the story of the rich man who begged for a drop of water. Considering these and like evils of the tongue, Christ groaned, because men do not weigh these, and to teach us to groan over these evils and to carefully avoid them.

VII. He said to him : " Be thou opened." By this word, as by a key, he opened the tongue of the mute. That key signifies a firm purpose of moderating the tongue, of closing it by silence and not opening it without cause and previous reflection, of freeing our minds with the briefest speech possible. Make doors and bars to thy mouth" (Eccli. 28 : 28) ; that is, strengthen thy mouth by the virtue of silence, with serious resolves, as locks and bars, so that it will never be open, unless beforehand, by a decree of reason, you say to it : " Be thou opened." " A hawker does not let loose the hawk unless he sees a goose ; and a rational mouth is relaxed to pour forth irrational things," says Peter Damien.

" I said : I will take heed to my ways : that I sin not with my tongue. I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner

stood against me" (Ps. 38 : 1, 2). That this vow may be more efficacious, add some punishment to it, if you have blundered with the tongue. "Melt your gold and silver," that is, restrain your words which as gold and silver you should guard ; as when one is about to travel into foreign countries, he melts his gold and silver plate. It is not necessary to say few things in many words, but many things in few words. For the word *melt* others like St. Ambrose read *bind ;* bind your speech lest it swell out, lest it become obscene and cause many sins, as garments trailing on the ground are wont to gather dust and mud. Speak very little, and slowly and considerately according to the advice of Seneca : "The greatest of all great things is this : I command you to be slow of speech." Let each one say and implant in his heart : "I will take heed to my ways : that I sin not with the tongue. There is a Greek proverb which says : "Tongue, whither goest thou ? to build a city and finally destroy it ?" The Wise man says : "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18 : 21).

Like a janitor, ask your tongue going out : "Tongue, whither goest thou ?" to build a city, go and build it ; to destroy a city, stay at home in your room. If we curb the tongue with this bridle, it will build for us a city in heaven, because, as St. James says : "If one does not offend by the tongue, this is a perfect man."

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

MANIFOLD FALSE FRIENDSHIP.

I. False friends are those who approve everything. II. Who praise one before his face. III. Who render homage. IV. Who are companions of the table and of gain. V. Relations. VI. Patrons and companions in crime. VII. Who love by turns.

"And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10: 29).

THIS is not an easy nor a useless question: "Who is my neighbor?" Not easy because the old law seems to have given reason for this question: "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself." Since it is uncertain who can be considered a friend or an enemy, not unwisely is it asked: "And who is my friend?" Nor is it useless. For from this ignorance arise many uncomfortable things. First, because you do not know whom you should avoid; you will easily shun open enemies, not so pretended friends. When the wound of Alexander the Great was bound, and his friend Parmenio chided him for exposing himself to the enemy, he answered: "Do you preserve me from my pretended friends, and I will preserve myself from my enemies." Friends killed Alexander, Alcibiades, Agesilaus, Antigonus, Demetrius, Cæsar, Lentulus, Pyrrhus and Pompey whom enemies could not. David is ordered by the prophet Gad to return to the land of Juda from the house of Moab, as though he would live more securely in the land of his open enemy Saul than in the house of his false and suspected friend. You will often err in your choice of men unless you know your friends; you will do what Joab upbraided David for doing: "Thou lovest them that hate thee, and thou hatest them that love thee: if Absalom had lived, and all we had been slain, then it would have pleased thee" (2 Kings 19: 6). The Lord in to-day's gospel shows us a true friend, the Samaritan.

I. Some have for friends those who never contradict them, but praise and approve their deeds, or at least excuse them. But they err; for it is said by Isaias: "O my people, they that call thee blessed, the same deceive thee and destroy the way of thy steps" (3:12). God threatens such, saying: "Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow: and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age to catch souls" (Ezech. 13:18). If your bed were the hard floor, you would not sleep well; but if a mattress were placed on it, then you could sleep with comfort. So some people sleep in their sins, but their conscience at times troubles them, and so their rest is broken. What then do false friends do? They excuse, nay, even defend, their crimes or at least by silence approve them; then their masters sleep soundly in their sins. But, when they shall awake in judgment, they shall see what kind of friends they had, and they shall curse them for all eternity. Hence David prays: "The just man shall correct me in mercy and shall reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head" (Ps. 140:5); that is, I do not wish the smooth tongue of the flatterer who extenuates my sins and paints them in glowing colors; I wish rather for correction. "Oil," says Galen, "if it be mixed with cold substances, becomes cold; if with warm, it becomes warm." So those flatterers: Do you assert? they assert; do you deny? they deny. Like the chameleon, they put on the form of things they see; like an echo which gives back sound; like a mirror which shows all forms. Oil refreshes and allays the pain of a wound; if it be too hot or too cold, it injures the wounded member and causes fever and weakness. And so the flatteries of such friends. Whence in the Psalm cited above, St. Jerome for *oil* of *sinner* reads *oil* of *poison*. Therefore, wise men had for their best friends those who corrected their defects. David had his Nathan, the Emperor Theodosius his Ambrose. Finally, the Samaritan who bound the wounds of the injured man poured not only oil into them but wine also. Wine stimulates, oil allays, and therefore friends are to be reproved, but not without kindness.

II. Some think those friends who praise them to their face or from whom they hear things pleasing to themselves. But we do not learn this from Proverbs (29:5): "A man that speaketh to his friend with flattering and dissembling words spreadeth a net for his feet." St. Ignatius Martyr says:

"They who praise me scourge me." They are accustomed often openly, to detract those whom they praise to their face, like Judas to salute a friend with a kiss, and in the meantime to betray him; or as Joab, to kiss Amasa, and to stab him in the back. Thus the Pharisees did with Christ; they approach him as friends, and say: "Master, we know that thou art a true speaker." True friends do not do this: on the contrary, they chide and reprehend those present when they fail; those absent, however, they commend. So Christ acted with the Jews, for when present, he chided them: "You are of your father the devil" (Matt. 8:44); but when absent he calls them *sons*. The Samaritan did well in pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the injured man. "Oil on the outside and wine inside are most agreeable tonics for a man," says Pliny. Friends therefore are to be chided on the inside, that is, secretly; outwardly or in public when absent, are to be commended.

III. Some have for friends those who serve them and excite recreations. They err, for those friends are built on the good fortune of their masters; but when that is taken away they are friends no longer. "He is a friend for the time, he will not be found in the day of trial." "My brethren have passed by me as the torrent that passeth swiftly in the valleys" (Job 6:15). If in the rainy season, when thirst does not easily afflict the traveler, you cross the torrent, you will find it full and swollen; if a little while after and when the sun is pouring down, you cross the same, you will thirst and wish to drink and you will not find a single drop in it. This is what Job discovered for himself; for while he was happy, he was recognized by many friends; but when adverse fortune overtook him his friends did not know him any longer, nor did they speak one word of consolation. Cicero says: "As swallows are present in summer, but fly away at the approach of winter, so false friends are present in the joyful time of life; but in time of calamity they disappear; when they see the winter of misfortune, they fly away. True friendship is specially found in adversity; then, indeed, one's very misery requires and implores a faithful friend. "Prosperity draws a friend, adversity drives him away," says Seneca. Demetrius Phalerius says: "True friends are called to be present on joyful occasions, but are not willingly called in adversity." The Samaritan teaches this who is willingly present with the unfortunate man in time of necessity, when

he goes down from Jerusalem, the state of prosperity, to Jericho, the change of fortune and adversity. In Jerusalem and peace you will find many friends, but when you go down to Jericho, none.

IV. Some believe those to be friends whom they always have as guests and followers of gain. But these, by no means, are friends because they do not love you but yours, and moreover rather themselves, and when they see their emoluments dwindling, they cease to love. "And there is a friend, a companion at the table, and will not abide in the day of distress" (Eccli. 6 : 10). The mice in our houses live on our food, yet they do not trust us like those friends whom Alphonsus, King of Sicily, on a voyage compared to certain birds flying around the ship as long as he threw food to them. "Some of my courtiers," said he, "are very much like these, for, when they receive a gift or benefice for which they have been fighting among themselves, they run away." Abraham was not such a friend to the King of Sodom, who, although he greatly assisted him in overcoming his enemies, refused any compensation and would not accept a share of the booty offered him. "I lift up my hand to the Lord God the Most High the possessor of heaven and earth, that from the very woof thread unto the shoe latchet, I will not take of anythings which are thine, lest thou say, I have enriched Abram" (Gen. 14 : 22,23). Nor did the Samaritan act thus, for although he did not act like certain doctors who attend those only from whom they expect a fee, and neglect the poor; but gratuitously, since he could hope for nothing from the wounded man already robbed, he spent his own money for his cure. Many accompany a friend in taverns as long as he loosens his purse-strings; but when he ceases to spend money, they desert him, and not without anger and maledictions.

V. They reckon relatives and those joined to them by some necessity among their friends. But they very often err. For if these truly are friends, why does the Lord say: "And a man's enemies are those of his own household" (Matt. 10 : 36). Then why does he order to hate them, saying: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke, 14 : 26). Those related by blood he wishes us to hate, not outsiders and unknown ones, because those for the most part seek and

procure for us temporal gains, but obstruct our salvation, because the way of salvation is contrary to the flesh. St. Bernard says of such a friend: "If he tries to persuade me that something bad is just, he is on the right, but as Judas, he betrays us with a kiss." Such was Peter once when he wished to dissuade Christ, willing to suffer, saying: "Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee." But what did he hear from the Lord? "Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me: because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men" (Matt. 16 : 23). Holy men learned this from Christ, who did not allow themselves by flatteries to be impeded on the road to salvation by friends and relatives. His brothers tried in many ways to prevent St. Bernard from entering religion; his mother and brothers tried the same with St. Thomas Aquinas. His relatives urged St. Gordian, martyr, to deny Christ with the lips at least, but to believe in him in his heart, in order to save his life. But these great heroes did not listen to the hissing of the serpent and the enticements of relatives. We behold this in that wounded man; for although he was a Jew, the priest and Levite passed him by, but the Samaritan, a traveler and a stranger, showed him mercy, that you may understand that relatives are not always friends, that they often desert man and care not for the salvation of his soul.

VI. Some have for friends the companions and patrons of their crimes. But these are indeed deadly enemies, because they lead the miserable ones to death. Hence the Wise man says: "An unjust man allureth his friend: and leadeth him into the way that is not good" (Prov. 16 : 29). Thus the false prophets allured King Achab into an unjust war, promising him victory; but the king perished. How many such are there! How many frequent saloons with companions which they would not do alone! How many like to benefit friends and foolishly take on themselves strifes and enmities! How many parents provide for their sons and enrich them by evil gains! Do not these dead bury their dead? Do they not lead them along the wrong road? Josaphat had contracted such a bad friendship with Achab, too tenderly saying: "As I am so art thou." Deceived by Achab, and ordered to put on the royal armor, he bore the brunt of the battle and narrowly escaped being killed with his seducer, Achab. Not so our Samaritan, who did not lead

the wounded man into a lonely place, nor into the woods, to desert him and to leave him there to be devoured by wild beasts, but into an inn, to be cured. Many also lead each other into saloons, not to be cured, but to be filled with liquor. The Samaritan raised the poor man and placed him on his own beast, and forced him to ride who was unable to walk. Those friends effect that healthful people shall fall into sickness or afflictions of the body, that horsemen, who formerly had plenty, shall walk on foot, while their money having been spent on drink, they begin to want with the prodigal son.

VII. Some consider those friends by whom they themselves by turns are loved. But these are not always to be reckoned true friends, for when you shall have ceased to love them, or by one word offend them, you will often find them enemies. "And there is a friend that turneth to enmity" (Eccl. 6 : 10) ; that is, for a slight offense. Like some dogs that caress you while you pet them, but that show their teeth and bite if you vex them. Proud friends, when touched by a light word, often become the bitterest enemies. It seems that it was said of these in Psalm 143 : 5 : "Touch the mountans and they shall smoke." The devil thought he would see the same thing in Job when he said to God : "Touch his mouth and flesh, and then you will see that he will bless you before your face." But true friends, such as Job was, are not so perverted ; they always love who truly love, even made enemies. Our Samaritan teaches this ; for although the Jews were most hostile to the Samaritans, persecuted them, and despised them, nevertheless the Samaritan did not despise the wounded Jew, but treated him most friendly. David is also an example, who, although he daily noticed the sinister look of Saul towards him, and even his open hatred, did not cease to love him, but, on the contrary, prevented Abisai from putting him to death ; his death finally he deplored with bitter tears, and he revenged it by killing the slayer (2 Kings 1). Therefore, friends are many, but true friends are few, because, as the Wise man says : "I also am his friend : but that is only a friend in name" (Eccl. 37 : 1). The Pharisee does not ask who is his friend in name, nor does Christ so answer ; but he is a friend in truth and deed who performs the offices of a neighbor and true friend ; and they believe that such a one is a friend, and he only.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

CONFESSION.

The purification of leprous persons was ordered for five reasons. I. On account of an offended God : 1, because thus we show the worship due to God ; 2, we thus confess the justice of God and our own injustice ; 3, by it we acknowledge the power of God and our own weakness. II. On account of Christ : 1, that we may testify to his innocence ; 2, that we may magnify his glory ; 3, that we may prove our love for him ; 4, that we may prepare to receive him in the Holy Eucharist. III. On account of the one confessing : 1, that man might have a judge like himself ; 2, that he might have a sensible sign of his reconciliation ; 3, that he might have a faithful friend to whom he could open all his secrets. IV. On account of sin : 1, that the disease of the soul might be cured by an antidote ; 2, that confession might subdue the passion of sinning ; 3, that the punishment of sin might be mitigated. V. On account of our neighbor : 1, lest he might be scandalized ; 2, that he might be edified ; 3, that no one should be esteemed above another.

"Go, show yourselves to the priests" (Luke 17 : 14).

THERE are many, especially heretics, and some Catholics even, to whom it is distasteful to be sent to the priests for the remission of their sins ; it seems enough and more to confess to God and be absolved by him, especially since we hold that man is justified by an act of contrition even before confession of sins. "Why then," they say, "is confession necessary ?" This objection is clearly destroyed in to-day's gospel, in which Christ sends the ten lepers to the priests : "Go, show yourselves to the priests." Why did the Lord do this ? Could not he alone cleanse them ? It is added that "while on they went, they were cleansed." If he wished to cleanse them on the way, why did he send them to the priests ? The Lord wished by this to describe the precept of confession, that although before it the sins of a man are often remitted, if before it he shall have made an act of contrition, neverthe-

less, that we may know we are still obliged to show ourselves to the priest by confession. But why did Christ wish this? Why did God wish the lepers to show themselves to the priests? The law of God ordered it, you say. I say, likewise, Christ ordered this. Wherefore, it should suffice for a Christian to know that this is a precept of Christ, and not to curiously investigate why this is a precept, and, moreover, with those ten lepers and in simplicity of mind to go and show himself. Lest there should be any room for argument I shall presently show how worthily and aptly the confession of sins was instituted and ordered for us by Christ. That solemn purification of the lepers in the old law, it seems to me, was ordered for five reasons. First, on account of God, that they should give glory to him and worship due for their cure; therefore, the leper is ordered to offer sacrifice; secondly, on account of Christ, through whose blood all men, lepers in soul, were redeemed; therefore, they should offer two sparrows, kill one and release the other, the former signified humanity dead on the cross—the latter, the immortal divinity of Christ; thirdly, on account of himself, that being cleansed he could securely and freely mingle with men without contumely or opprobrium; fourthly, on account of the leprosy itself which, since it is a contagious disease, must be isolated and cleansed and purified by contact with the priest; fifthly, on account of our neighbor, so that he should not doubt about its cure.

I. It was instituted most fittingly on account of an offended God. First, because by it we show the worship due to God not otherwise than by sacrifices and oblations. The sacrifices of the old law were not pleasing to God unless they were destined for the honor of God and accompanied by internal acts of virtue. If we draw away from these, you will hear Isaias immediately saying: "To what purpose do you offer me the multitude of your victims, saith the lord? I am full," etc. (1 : 11). They were acceptable to him only inasmuch as they were some protestation of divine worship made by the humble. But sacramental confession is the most express protestation of divine worship, while man subjects and humiliates himself in it to God for his honor and not for his own, nay, even attributing to himself ignominy and confusion according to Daniel: "To thee, O Lord, justice: but to us confusion of face" (9 : 7). For this reason David says: "With burnt offerings thou wilt not be delighted, a contrite and humble heart thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 50 : 18); that is, that will

be an agreeable sacrifice to you which in body and spirit will testify to your majesty : that which confession does more expressly than the sacrifices of the old law, for these of themselves were indifferent, but that in conceived words looks to the worship of God. " We will render the calves of our lips " (Osee 14 : 3). The calf of the lip is confession of sins, by which we give glory to God ; but to ourselves as sinners, we give confusion. Secondly, because by it, we declare the justice of God, but our own injustice. Many have been so mad as to have ascribed their sins to God himself as the cause : all the Gentiles, now also many heretics, especially the Calvinists. Our first parents labored under this vice, while Adam laid the blame on the woman whom he had received from God, and therefore, indirectly on God ; Eve placed it on the serpent. Hence, St. Gregory says that the branch of this error in the human race has grown from that root to the present time. Therefore, that we may controvert that horrible blasphemy, which makes God the author of sin, Confession has been most fittingly and most wisely instituted, in which man asserts that he himself is the author of sin, vindicates God from all blame, attributes justice to him and iniquity to himself. For, who confesses a crime of which he is not the author ? While, therefore, the sinner confesses, by the very fact he acknowledges that he is the Author of his crimes, and thus vindicates God. Thirdly, because by it we declare the power of God and our own weakness. It is customary in war for the conquered to give up their arms. Since, therefore, the sinner takes up arms against God and shows himself rebellious to his laws as often as he transgresses them ; it is but just then that he who took glory from God should make a retraction and declare himself conquered and unequal to the strength of God, by laying down his arms, his sins by objection. Hence, it is that God humiliates and oppresses refractory and insolent men until, by confessing their sin, they cede the victory to God. Thus he afflicted Pharao, who said : " I do not know the Lord," until he said : " I have sinned this time also, the Lord is just : I and my people are wicked " (Exod. 9 : 27). Thus he oppressed Nabuchodonosor, who said : " Is not this the great Babylon which I have built to be the seat of the kingdom, by the strength of my power and in the glory of my excellence ? " (Dan. 4 : 27). He cast him forth from among men to eat grass as an ox until he should bless the Most High, and praise and glorify him that liveth

forever, for his power is an everlasting power. Thus he afflicted Antiochus with a most painful malady until he said: "I know, therefore, that for this cause these evils have found me" (1 Mach. 6 : 13). In this manner glory is given to God; so that to confess the truth and to accuse oneself is nothing else than to give glory to God, for as St. Augustine says: "When we acknowledge our sins, we commend the glory of God." Joshua, about to force Achan to confess, said: "Give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess and tell me what thou hast done and hide it not" (Jos. 7 : 19).

II. On account of Christ the Lord, that with our mouth we should declare his innocence. The Jews, and Gentiles, say that Christ was crucified on account of his sins; hence to the former he was a *stumbling block;* to the latter, *foolishness.* They crucified him between two thieves, "that he should be reputed among the wicked," as Isaias says. But we Christians, that we may openly proclaim his innocence, confess our crimes, and call ourselves guilty, to vindicate Christ. When we confess our sins we do nothing else than assert ourselves guilty, and Christ innocent; and this we justly do so as not to place our burden on other shoulders. So David, seeing his people punished for his sin, cried out to God: "It is I, I am he that have sinned, I have done wickedly: these that are the sheep, what have they done?" (2 Kings 24 : 17). Do you think the same as often as you confess and say: It is I who have sinned: Christ who was a sheep, what has he done? Thus you will vindicate Christ from the accusation of sin, while you proclaim yourself the guilty one, and that Christ suffered innocently for you. Secondly, that we may magnify the glory of Christ, while we show him so many and grave wounds of the soul to be healed. Great is the glory of a physician who cures a hopless case. How much greater appears the glory of Christ when we see so many sinners daily afflicted with such enormous crimes and falling so often having recourse to him through confession, and departing, healed with wonderful quickness. St. Augustine says: "Is it not to the praise of God when you confess your sins? Certainly, it tends greatly to his praise, because the more desperate the case of the sick person, the greater the praise of the doctor." Thirdly, that we may prove our love for him. He who truly loves his friend, easily tells him all his secrets; if he did not, he would not truly love him. Dalila, wishing to try Samson's love for her, asked nothing more from him

than that he should tell her his secret. "How dost thou say thou lovest me, when thy mind is not with me? Thou hast told me lies three times, and wouldst not tell me wherein thy great strength lieth" (Judges 16:15). There was nothing that Christ our spouse did not make known to us; he manifested his glory in his transfiguration, his weakness in his passion, the name of God in his preaching, so that no one could doubt of his love. It remains for us to prove our love for him. And in what way shall we better prove it than if we reveal to him the most hidden secrets of our heart, which we do not dare to reveal to any one else? This is done by confession, for what is said to the confessor is said to Christ. Fourthly, that we should prepare a clean dwelling for Christ the Lord coming in the Eucharist. When John the Baptist was preaching penance, he often inculcated: "Prepare the way of the Lord." But which is the way of the Lord in receiving the Eucharist? Is it not the mouth and heart of man? And how can we cleanse them more profitably than if we eject the filth of sin from the heart through the mouth? David, who could not receive his Lord, swept his spirit: what would he have done if he had this guest? Let us therefore use the broom of confession that we may prepare the way and dwelling worthy of God.

III. On account of the penitent, it was aptly instituted; first, that man would have a judge for all things, like himself, and according to his will. The Israelites appealed from God the judge to man the judge, Moses saying to him: "Speak thou to us and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us lest we die" (Exod. 20:19). If we were to have only God for a judge, we would be miserable in many ways, because his judgments are incomprehensible and his ways are inscrutable. St. Paul says: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34). Wherefore, God, in a manner, ceded his right and gave us a judge like ourselves; not only in flesh and blood but also in weakness. "For we have a high priest who can have compassion on our infirmities, one tempted in all things like as we are, but without sin" (Heb. 4:15). This seems to be the reason why Christ did not give the keys of Penance to John the Baptist but to Peter; because as John was without sin, and Peter at one time was a sinner to the latter and not to the former, he gave the keys, that a sinner might more easily pity a sinner, and grant him pardon; a sinner has no difficulty

in confessing to a sinner. Secondly, that man should have some sensible sign by which he might understand, as far as God is concerned, that his sins are forgiven. David sought such a sign of his forgiven sin saying : "To my hearing thou shalt give joy and gladness ; and the bones that have been humbled shall rejoice" (Ps. 50 : 10). And he obtained it when, having made confession, he heard from the prophet Nathan as though he were his confessor : "The Lord hath taken away thy sin" (2 Kings 12 : 13). If the sacrament of Penance were not instituted, we would have no sign of the remission of sins. If we ourselves place no obstacle, although not infallibly, prudently, however, we can conjecture, absolution is a most efficacious and a most certain sign of the remission of sins. After King Ezechias had heard from Isaias that he was healed by the Lord, who condemned him to death, he sought some sign in testimony of the prophecy such as that the shadow should return back ten degrees and it did (4 Kings 20 : 10). This reversing of the shadow signifies nothing else than the confession of sins. Sin is a shadow because, as this is a privation of light, so that is a privation due rectitude, by which man transgresses the ten lines of precepts. What sign then do you wish of the remission of your sins ? If the shadow of crimes lying hid in your heart is reversed through the ten precepts which have been transgressed, if it is cast out by confession, there is no doubt but that you will have a sure sign of your cure when you hear the words : "I absolve thee." Thirdly, that man might have some faithful friend to whom he could open the hidden secrets of his heart. There is no friend to whom a secret can be securely committed : he can at any time be forced in case of public necessity to reveal it. But there is no power under heaven which could force the confessor to reveal his secret even though the destruction of the whole world depended on it. For this reason this secret is called the seal of confession. It is not of wax but of iron ; and what is stronger than iron ? And it happens, without doubt by the singular providence of God, that although a priest may be a wicked man, he cannot be urged by any one to violate the seal of confession. Christ seemed to have insinuated this, when with breathing, he gave the apostles the power of the keys. For as a breath cannot be seen, nor measured, nor seized, nor is it known whence it comes or whither it goes ; so sins deposited in confession, he wished to be intangible, and

at the same time it seems that a special gift was joined to the power of the keys, by which the secret of confession should be holily preserved. Therefore, although priests in other things may be men, weak, frail, liable to fall; in this, however, they are as Gods, firm and inflexible according to the saying: "I have said: you are Gods."

IV. On account of the crimes; first, that the disease of the soul might be cured by an antidote. It is common for men to hide their sins, because an offense of the Creator is opposed to nature. But as God brought into the light Adam hiding after the crime was committed, that he might acknowledge that he had sinned; so it has been justly ordained that he who is not ashamed to sin should be ashamed in confessing it and acknowledging that he has sinned. This is what Jeremias says: "Thou hadst a harlot's forehead, and thou wouldst not blush. Therefore, at the least from this time call to me: thou art my father" (3 : 3, 4). A dissolute girl is not as much ashamed of the sight of any one as of her father, whom she knows she has most grievously offended; it is just, therefore, that her impudence be cured by shame, and that she should appear before him from whom she fled. He does not as yet entirely hate sin who loves its cave. Secondly, that confession might curb the passion of sinning. Because to declare one's sins is greatly opposed to human nature. A bridle restraining man from sin could not be more aptly put on him than if this yoke were placed on him. God said to Sennacherib, the king of Syria: "Thou hast been mad against me, and thy pride hath come up to my ears: therefore, I will put a ring in thy nose, and a bit between thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest" (4 Kings 19 : 28). A bull with a ring in his nose and a horse with a bit in his mouth are easily managed. The same thing is done with a sinner, who can easily escape an earthly magistrate. Thirdly, that the punishment of crime might be mitigated. He who has destroyed what belongs to another is bound by a twofold debt of satisfaction: to the magistrate, that he suffer punishment for his theft; to his neighbor, that he make restitution. Likewise, he who sins, contracts a fault and a punishment: the former by contrition he is bound to atone; the latter by satisfaction. If one wished to forgive a thief a stolen thing while the thief humbly acknowledged his error, certainly he would act most kindly with the thief. This happens gener-

ally in confession, for God has prescribed for the sinner the means of confession, by its nature a punishment, so that by it at least some part of the debt of satisfaction may be forgiven him. He would be a very good doctor who, in place of money, would order the taking of medicines which he prescribed. This God does in confession, who indeed has prescribed a more bitter remedy, but that through it you might allay part of the punishment. "Shame itself," says St. Augustine, "is part of the remission."

V. On account of our neighbor; first, that he may not be scandalized when he sees those whom he knew to be sinners approaching the holy table. If confession not to man but to God would suffice, it could be easily believed that those accustomed to sin would communicate unworthily. But when one is seen to go to confession, suspicion fades and scandals cease. The Pharisee was indignant when he saw the sinful woman approach; and he would have cause if she had sat at the banquet; but it was because she came to weep and show her wounds that she approached the feet of her Doctor and heard from Christ: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Secondly, that our neighbor may be edified and animated to penance. How can one withdraw from confessing when he sees earthly rulers kneel at the feet of the priest? How can one despise confession when he sees men renowned for sanctity kneeling penitent? How can one fear when he sees the most desperate cases treated so easily and with such a sweet remedy? Thirdly, that no one should be esteemed above another when he sees this one and the same measure suited to all. Alphonsus, King of Aragon, said that ashes made all men, high and low, equal; but this was the measure of the dead; confession is the measure of the living, whom it makes equal. St. Paul says: "For all have sinned and all need the glory of God;" that is, the grace and mercy of God, which they seek through penance. All have sinned and all need absolution. What, therefore, proud earth and ashes, who art bound by the same law, you must undergo the same judgment and expect the same pardon. What if the memory of ashes lowers your plume; consider that you need God's grace, and with the common lot of all bend your knee to the priest, strike your breast, and say: "Through my fault."

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

TOO MUCH SOLICITUDE FOR PASSING THINGS SHOULD BE LAID ASIDE.

I. Because no one can serve two masters. II. Because he who gave more will give less. III. Because he feeds the birds and clothes the lilies. IV. Because too much solicitude is useless. V. Because that solicitude belongs to the Gentiles. VI. Because God is our father. VII. Because, by agreement, he has promised us sustenance.

"I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on" (Matt. 6:25).

With very good reason St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop of Ravenna, exclaims on to-day's gospel: "O, how much does eternal piety disturb itself with love of man! He who could confirm his precepts by his authority alone recommends them with all the labor of a doctor; so that he who was able to place the limit of his promise in faith alone leads his hearers to faith in the thing promised, after the example of an adviser." The word of a prince should be of as much value for keeping a promise as the oath of his subjects. And, if the word of a prince is sufficient, is not the Word of God more so? Christ could have used one word to promise us support, and we should be content, because the Word of God is more than an oath. Nevertheless, however, he wished to convince us by many sweetest arguments to have faith in his Word and to place in him the solicitude for our necessities. Since, therefore, the Lord has deigned to advise what he could command, let us listen with all attention to the most gentle of orators.

I. Because no one can serve two masters: God and Mammon; for whoever is bound by too much solicitude for

earthly things, cannot be mindful of God and heavenly things; either he loves God and will despise earthly things; or he loves these and will despise God. St. Cyprian says: "As the same eyes cannot behold heaven and earth at the same time, so the love of the world and of God cannot dwell in the heart together." The reason is: there are three things in riches, when they rule man, which disagree in a great measure with the service of God. First, they wish to be preserved, increased and magnified; but God has ordered us to administer them faithfully, to share with the needy and to despise them. Secondly, they draw to themselves the hearts of their lovers. "Where thy treasure is there also is thy heart," says the Lord; but he orders the same thing: "If riches abound, do not set the heart on them." And again: "Son, give me thy heart." Finally, they bring fear, diffidence and solicitude with them. But God wishes these to be far from us saying: "Be not solicitous," etc.

II. Because he who gave what is greater will give what is less. God gave us a body and soul. But "is not the soul more than food and the body more than raiment?" says the Lord; he will give the latter, therefore, because they are far less. There is a common saying: "He who gives a horse, gives also a bridle." Why, therefore, may we not expect the same from God, especially since he has given a body and soul to those in no way cooperating with him? If, therefore, he has given us a body and soul without our cooperation, much more will he give food and raiment to us cooperating. We know the force of this argument in Adam and Eve, for whom, before their creation, he prepared this world as a most magnificent dwelling. We know it in infants, whom he nourishes in the mother's womb, and whom, when born, he furnishes with mother's milk. Why these? Because he who gave a body and soul gives also food and raiment. But it is not enough to have given us a body and soul, he gave us also his only begotten Son; he gave us him and gives him daily in the Eucharist.

III. "Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them." And again, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not nor do they spin." If God feeds the brute animals and those that do not lay up stores for themselves, and that are not fed by men, such as birds that fly most freely through the air, especially ravens,

the most gluttonous of birds, that are deserted in the nest by their parents; again, if the lilies of the field grow without the aid of man; and if he so clothes them that they surpass the splendor of Solomon; how much more will he do for man, whose father he asserts himself to be? For he does not say: "God feeds those;" but "your heavenly Father feedeth them." Truly, each species of animals uses different foods, and of these there is provided for each although some cannot seek their food. Some are deserted by their parents, as the raven's young, who are therefore said to "invoke God" (Ps. 148), and in the meantime they are nourished by the falling dew. The providence of God appears wonderful towards the kingfisher, a maritime bird a little larger than a sparrow; as Pliny writes, which places its nest in the sand on the shore and about the middle of winter hatches its young. Is it not wonderful that the nest with its young is not swallowed up by the ocean? But on account of this bird, otherwise called halcyon, the winds are silent, and the turbulent elements are appeased; and those days of hatching and nourishing are called by the sailors halcyon. They know these days and that they are safe for navigation. Why, therefore, do you not rely on God even beyond the hope of all, even when overcome by the greatest calamities; you whom he wishes to be like his own image, since in mid-winter he calms the vast and angry sea for the sake of those little ones? Another argument for the same providence is written of the whale, which when it becomes too fat cannot hear any more, the mountains of flesh stopping up that sense. Therefore, nature has assigned him a leader, a fish of white color with a very long head and short tail, that never parts company with the whale but always swims before him like a leader or guiding star; it provides everything for him and warns him with its tail when to recede and when to advance; by a sign it warns him of the snares of fishermen in time to avoid them. Who will not admire the providence of God, who has given to the largest animal of the sea one of the smallest as leader and guide? How much more, therefore, will God provide for the necessaries of man and especially a guardian angel to direct and govern him! If he so provides for brutes that do not know him as their benefactor and creator, and that cannot praise him; will he not have greater care for men who know and adore him and who give him thanks? If, on entering a royal banquet hall, you should see tables

prepared and loaded down with a variety of food for servants and cooks and stablemen; would you not think that surely the friends and children of the king were to feast there? Since, therefore, in the hall of this world we see tables filled with the necessaries for all creatures, why should we despair?

IV. Because too much solicitude is useless, as is indicated by the words: "And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubic?" Why, then, are you solicitous about food and clothing, since in this world you can effect nothing unless God aids you, who causes you to grow without your knowing it? We gather from this that the prohibited solicitude deals mostly with thoughts only. What profit is it for you to always think how your ship will land its freight; how the crops will be preserved; how your debts will be paid; how your house will remain in your absence? Who does not know how fruitless were the thoughts of that rich man who said: "I will destroy my barns," etc.? For that very night he heard the voice of God: "Fool, this night they shall require thy soul of thee;" and what you have prepared, whose shall they be? Such anxiety is not only useless, but also harmful to both body and soul; it destroys health, shortens life, disturbs sleep, and continually tortures the mind. But it afflicts the soul with greater evils than these; for it so obscures the intellect that it has less discernment for spiritual things, namely, the providence of God and the truth of his promises; the same way that a cloud obscures the light of the sun. It afflicts the will with sloth towards the same divine things; it weakens faith, hope and charity towards God; it chokes the seed of the husbandman, or the Word of God; it distracts in prayer; it loses time and sometimes leads to despair; like that mule that involved Absalom, so the devil involves us by the hairs of cares, and afterwards we are easily pierced with the triple lance, concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes, and the pride of life. The Egyptians knew this well, and therefore imposed on the Hebrews the burden and solicitude of collecting chaff, that they might be withdrawn from their sacrifices and delayed in their journey to the promised land (Exod. 5).

V. "For after all these things do the heathen seek;" as though the Lord said: You Christians are friends of God, to you more is due than to infidels, who neither worship nor know him nor believe in his providence, and, therefore, it is

not wonderful if they are solicitous about their support; but you believe that God governs all things most wisely and most justly and you serve him faithfully. It is becoming, therefore, that on this account you should by far have greater confidence in God than heathens, and for this reason God in many ways has strengthened the hope and confidence of the faithful in himself. He wished them to worship him on the Sabbath; he wished that manna should be collected on one day only; and if more than enough should be collected, it should be scattered to the worms (Exod. 16). He ordered that the seventh year should be one of rest, that is, in each seventh year they should not sow anything nor prune the vines (Levit. 24). For God promised that he would give them manna daily, and that the earth would, each seventh year, produce spontaneously. Finally, he wished us to ask in prayer, not for our annual but daily bread. If we believe in the providence of God, we should firmly trust in it, especially because we are Christians, and we know that the eye of the Lord is always watching over the just especially. If God provides necessaries for the heathen, and often wonderfully, will he not provide for Christians? If he feeds those ravens, the Turks; if he clothes that grass which to-morrow is thrown into the oven; that is, unbelievers, Jews and public sinners, why will he not provide necessaries for Christians, who serve him? In Egypt, where rain is scarce, the Nile yearly overflows its banks and waters the fields sufficiently for the maturing of crops. In Cappadocia, Media and Thrace, where there are no bees, honey is distilled from trees. In the extreme North, where there is no wood, the bones of fish serve for kindling. "On Mount Cassius," says St. Basil, "every year at a certain time innumerable locusts are born, which destroy the crops. Wherefore, God provides a certain kind of bird, most voracious, that devours them and frees the fields from the pest." From all this it is evident how mindful God is of men, even of wicked and infidels, and therefore Christians have every reason to be filled with hope.

VI. "For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things." If he is our Father, how can he forget his children? "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb?" (Isa. 49 : 15); "and if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Ask some boy," says Cardinal Bellarmine, "what will you do when

your clothes will have been worn out? You are small, you have no money, you will have to go naked. You cannot frighten him. He will quickly answer: 'My father will provide them; he will not allow me to suffer.'" Why, therefore, do we not have as much confidence in God as children have in their parents? Some one may answer that he is solicitous for food and raiment and other necessaries because he is in need of them. St. Chrysostom says: "You should be more confident and less solicitous; because, if they are superfluous, it is no reason why you should expect to be provided by God."

VII. Because God has promised us necessary sustenance on condition that we seek first the kingdom of God when he said: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." He seems to say to us what he said to St. Catherine of Sienna: "Think of me and I will think of thee." Thus the father speaks to his son: "You go to school and study diligently, and whatever you need I will provide." So God acts with us. Bellarmine says: "If a Jew promised you a valuable gift, and you had his handwriting for the same, you would sleep content; and yet you have only the written promise of an infidel. But we have not one but many agreements of God in which he promises us all that is necessary for our support, and yet we are solicitous, as though we believed God to be powerless or deceiving." In to-day's gospel how many agreements? Let, therefore, there be an end to all care and anxiety, because he who gave life will also give the necessaries of life; because he who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers will do the same for you; because such solicitude is useless and harmful; because it is for heathens, and not for Christians, to seek such things; because your Father knows that you need all these; because he has promised you the kingdom of heaven and has bound himself by an agreement: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE CEMETERY, THE SCHOOL OF VIRTUE.

I. It teaches who and how much you are. II. It shows that young and old equally die. III. It shows that all will be alike in the grave. IV. It makes peace and harmony among the contentious. V. It shows what flesh is, which is so much loved. VI. It shows the seed-time of our resurrection.

"Behold a dead man was carried out" (Luke 7 : 12).

On last Sunday we went out and saw the lilies of the field, beautiful and sweet smelling : to-day we are called out again into a field, much unlike, however, to the former, less odoriferous and less beautiful. For behold, a young man is brought out from Naim, and whither ? to the cemetery, which is also called "God's acre." This is the field, unless I am mistaken, into which Isaac went forth, when he was awaiting his spouse, to meditate on holy and heavenly things ; such certainly is meditation on death. And this is the best school for young people to be sent to, that in the school of death they may learn to live well. Surely to such God sent Jeremias and us with him when he said : "Go forth into the valley of the son of Ennom (the Septuagint says cemetery). And thou shalt break the bottle in the sight of the men that shall go with thee: and thou shalt say to them : thus saith the Lord of hosts : even so will I break this people, and this city as the potter's vessel is broken, which cannot be made whole again, and they shall be buried in Topheth" (Jer. 19 : 2, 10, 11). Like little bottles we shall be broken in death, and shall be buried in God's acre. With Jeremiah, therefore, let us go forth to that school and let us learn to live well so that we may die well.

I. In this school, we see and learn who and how much you

are ; earth, namely, into which you shall be resolved, and as little as six or seven feet. We hear that God often said to Adam : "You are earth, and to earth you shall return." Very many blind mortals seem not to believe this since they are so proud, and exalt themselves above other men, until they come to that school where they are plainly convinced that they are only earth, because they shall be resolved into it. The Babylonians with their king labored in great blindness when they adored the idol of Bel, which, Strabo writes, was a golden statue forty feet long, and in weight one thousand Babylonian talents, to which was dedicated a golden bowl of twelve hundred talents. "The king said to Daniel : Doth not Bel seem to thee to be a living god ? Seest thou not how much he eateth and drinketh every day ? Then Daniel smiled and said : O king, be not deceived, for this is but clay within, and brass without" (Dan. 14 : 5, 6). Afterwards, with authority from the king, he destroyed Bel and proved what he had said that Bel was clay, adding : "Behold him whom you worshiped." How many labor in the same blindness, who attending to external splendor only think they themselves are golden, as though they were gods ; having no clay, nothing in common with men ; when in reality they are all clay except the garments they wear ! If you do not believe this come to the cemetery and show me anything left of them except dust and clay. The impious Antiochus labored in such blindness when he threatened to turn all Jerusalem into a cemetery. On his way he commanded his chariot to be driven without stopping ; it happened, as he was going with great speed, that he was thrown from his chariot and sustained several injuries. Thus he that seemed to himself to command even the waves of the sea, being proud above the condition of man, and to weigh the height of the mountains in a balance, now being cast down to the ground, was carried in a litter, bearing witness to the manifest power of God himself (2 Mach. 9 : 4–8). Worms ate him alive and he died a horrible death. Philip the emperor saw this when, having fallen from his horse in the hippodrome, he rose and turning to the place said : "See how a little sand upsets us who foolishly affect to rule the world."

II. See here that not only old men die, but even young men, boys and infants. See the graves, small and large—nearly as many small as large ones. Read the epitaphs—how many will you find there who scarcely began life or reached

the middle when taken away. When Daniel, having spread ashes on the floor of the temple, had caught not the idol Bel, but the priests and their wives, and children, who had entered during the night, and had eaten the food placed before Bel, he showed the king their footprints in the ashes. How many young men who live riotously consider themselves as immortal gods? But see the cemetery strewn with ashes; you certainly will find there the footprints and graves of young and old, in almost equal number; among them is the young man in to-day's gospel. Certainly not without grave reason did Samuel give to Saul, among other signs, this one of the royal dignity to be conferred on him: that, on his way, he would find two men by the tomb of Rachel, and they were to assure him that the asses had been found (1 Kings 10). He wished to admonish the future king, of human frailty from the tomb of Rachel, his great mother, for Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, whose mother was Rachel, who had died on that very way in spring-time, that young men and Saul with them should fear lest they themselves should suffer a like fate on the road to royal or other dignity even in the spring-time of youth. By another simile, Isaias proposes the same in these words: "As if a few olives that remain should be shaken out of the olive tree, or grapes when the vintage is ended" (24 : 13). Olives are picked when they are as yet bitter and unripe; on the contrary, grapes are not picked from the vine until they are ripe. So blind death takes away not only those ripe in age—the old; but also the unripe—the young.

III. See and learn that here there is no distinction between noble and ignoble; rich and poor; learned and ignorant; that, therefore, no one should despise another, nor exalt himself above another; since the cemetery shows us that all are equal; that it encloses them equally in a narrow bed; that they equally putrefy and are equally devoured by worms. St. Ambrose says: "A narrow bed is sufficient for rich and poor alike, and the earth which was not for one rich man living hides all dead." Alphonsus, King of Aragon, being asked what made princes and paupers alike, answered: Ashes. When St. Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, saw the ravages of death in the once beautiful countenance of Isabella of Spain, and what a narrow kingdom would receive and enclose her royal majesty, he bade farewell to the world and resolved to serve God, saying: "Narrow death has brought me life."

St. Augustine says: "When we, my mother and I, were waiting for favorable weather to return to Africa, the Prefect Pontianus, who had come from Rome to see us, urged us to go back with him, to inspect more closely the magnificent buildings and works of the Pagans. And being led with others to see the corpse of Cæsar in the tomb, I saw that it was of a livid color putrefying and being devoured by worms. And turning to my mother, I said: 'Where is the renowned body of Cæsar, where the greatness of his riches, his abundance of delights, his multitude of slaves, his mighty armies, his hunting dogs, swift horses, his singing birds, his royal couch, his imperial throne, his royal purple, his comely face, everything under heaven? Men trembled before you, princes feared you, cities worshiped you, all feared you. Where are all these? whither fled all your boasting, all your magnificence?' And my mother answered: 'Son, all these have perished; when his spirit departed, they left him bound in the tomb to putrefy.'" He continues: "Faithful of Christ, consider what we are! Go, O young and powerful ones, to the tombs of your fathers; consider what they were and what they are. Let us open their vaults and see who is master and who is servant; who is beautiful and who ugly; who is erect and who bowed down among them. Let us open the eyes of body and mind and consider that our great misery frequently is no trouble. Let us enter the tombs and what will we find there? Bones and ashes and worms. And this will be the end of us all."

IV. See and learn how much peace and concord reign among the buried ones; even those who, while alive, were sworn enemies; who could not live in the same house, much less eat at the same table. There in the cemetery in the same grave, peace reigns among all. Who could have effected this while they were living? Death effects it now. Seneca says: "Why are you angry with your servant, your master, your king? Wait a little. Behold death comes, which makes us all equal." Swarms of bees, when together, fight among themselves; but a little dust thrown on them separates them. Those who in life persist in not being reconciled, at length in the grave when a little dust is thrown on them, become friends. David says: "They are laid in hell (the Hebrew has it grave) like sheep: death shall feed upon them" (Ps. 48 : 15). Or as St. Augustine says: "Death is their shepherd." The dead, therefore, like sheep lie in the cemetery

with their shepherd death, who were unwilling to congregate in the sheepfold of the Church, with Christ the Shepherd; and it is to be feared that they are now lying in hell.

V. See and learn what that flesh is which here miserable mortals love so much even to insanity. See those corpses naked and stripped to the bone by worms. Is this that Jezabel who a little while before so beautiful adorned and painted herself? Nothing left of all this beauty but those bones? Where is the brow, the eyes, the cheeks, the power and royal majesty? Think of this and see, can you love those bones. St. Gregory says: "There is nothing more apt to subdue the desire of carnal appetites than for each one to think how that will be dead which he loves living. A fire is more easily put out by throwing earth on it than by water. In Melesia there is a plant which when burning cannot be extinguished except by throwing earth on it. Therefore, let him who feels the burning of passion go to the cemetery, throw a little earth on himself, at least in thought, and he will extinguish the fire.

VI. Finally, in this field see our seed-time and the hope of our harvest not so much buried as deposited. This is that field of the blood of Christ for the burial of pilgrims; the field of the heavenly potter who formed us from clay, and by death breaks and scatters it, and on the day of resurrection will reconstruct it; and he will reform the body of our humility fashioned after the body of his brightness, as he showed Jeremias in the figure of the potter's house. In this field the body is sown in corruption; it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15 : 42, 44). Therefore, as the field sown with seed is the hope of farmers, so is the cemetery the hope of Christians. Hope, I said, not the affair; because as the farmer fears while he hopes, lest his crops fail; so justly we fear the harvest of our resurrection, lest it blast our hopes, for it is written: "The hope of the wicked is dust which is blown away with wind." Many seeds in the field are devoured by birds. On the day of judgment many bodies in the cemetery will be despoiled by the ravens of hell; and many of the dead in that field will be struck by the lightning of the Judge. What, therefore, is to be done so that our hope in this field may not be crushed? Certainly we should be like those whom Christ wished to be buried in the

field of his blood, bought for the burial of pilgrims. Let us be such pilgrims in this world as St. Peter wishes when he says: "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims to refrain yourselves from carnal desires which war against the soul" (1 Pet. 2: 11). If we live in this world as pilgrims in a strange land, then our harvest will be great and we shall have no reason to fear that terrible day.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

WHAT MUST BE DONE ON SUNDAY.

I. We must abstain from sin and rise from it. II. We must put aside all secular business and cares. III. We must more liberally give alms. IV. We must hear the word of God. V. We must hear Holy Mass.

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 14:3).

CHRIST was accustomed often to heal maladies on the Sabbath and was not questioned by any one, for example: the man with dropsy (Luke 14); the man whose right hand was withered (Luke 6); the blind man (John 9); the sick man at the pool (John 7); the woman bowed together (Luke 13). For this very reason, the Jews persecuted him and sought to put him to death as a transgressor of the law, since miracles were works of piety and belonging to God rather than to man. Wherefore Christ wished to make the Sabbath more honorable by the curing of disease. But why? To show us that our souls should be healed on the Sabbath. For the healing of souls he resorted to the healing of bodies. "And what he did corporally, he wished to be understood also spiritually," says St. Augustine. He wished to show that Sunday was the proper day for healing the soul rather than the body. In the gospel we find five people healed by Christ on the Sabbath, who certainly indicate the five cures to be used on Sunday.

I. He cured the man with dropsy. Who is he but the sinner? Job 15 says: "How much more is man abominable and unprofitable who drinketh iniquity like water?" that is, he freely commits sin as though there were no punishment for it, like water is drunk without payment. This drinking habit must be corrected on Sunday at least—the habit of sinning must cease, for it is written in (Deut. 5): "Observe the day of the Sabbath to sanctify it" that is, observe it by

good works, do not defile it by sin. The wicked Jews themselves did not dare to seize Christ on the Sabbath. Sunday is called the Lord's day because it is given to his service. Wherefore, if any one has fallen into sin, let him strive to rise on that sacred day by penance, and if not by confession, at least by contrition. This is what Christ intimates in the parable of the ass having fallen into the pit, by which he understands literally the man with dropsy, mystically, the sinner. For what is the imprudent sinner but an ass fallen into the pit of hell? The Lord's day is the day of resurrection on which Christ did not wish to remain in the tomb but to rise early in the morning. Whence we devote that day to prayer in memory of him as did the Christians of old. Besides, Sunday was instituted as a day of rest for servants as well as beasts of burden. But how does the ass rest in a pit; how does your soul rest in a state of mortal sin? Rise from it, therefore, that you may find rest on the day of rest. If St. Jerome said: "When I shall have been angry and pondered in my mind some evil, and some nightly imagination shall have deceived me; I do not dare to enter the church of the Martyrs, I tremble so in body and soul;" how will you dare in a state of mortal sin to enter into the house of God?

II. The woman bowed together, who was entirely unable to look up, stood erect on the Sabbath. Who is such a one? St. Gregory answers: "The sinner who follows his lower appetites is bent from the uprightness of his mind;" that is, a man bent with secular cares and business, seeking the things of earth, and solicitous about food and clothing, wife and children. This one should stand erect on our Sabbath and contemplate rather heaven and divine things than earth and secular things. We have the same command typically when God forbade the Jews to collect manna on the Sabbath, which should be done with the body bowed down; nor did he permit them to go out but ordered each one to remain by himself. That the first Christians acted thus is evident from the writings of the Fathers. St. Gregory the Great in one of his letters says: "On the Lord's day we must cease from labors and by all means spend the time in prayer, so that any negligence done during the six days may be expiated by prayer on the day of the resurrection of Our Lord." St. Chrysostom says: "Let us make this a fixed law, not only for ourselves, but for our wives and children, that we shall spend this one day of the whole week by listen-

ing in meditation to the things which have been said." St. Jerome, with his companions, was accustomed on Sunday to visit the churches of the Martyrs in Rome. Finally, if there be anything most necessary for raising the soul to God and healing it, it is the examination of the life led during the past week and of the state of the soul, whether any part of it has been wounded, what it has gained and what it has lost during the past days. When the servants of the followers of Calvin saw that, according to his spirit, feast days were abolished on which they were wont to mend their garments, they asked their masters for a free day in the week, namely, Wednesday, on which to do their mending. If they were so anxious to repair their garments, why do you not, on Sunday at least, repair the injuries and vices of your soul, for the other six days your attention was given to the body and none whatever to the soul?

III. He healed the man whose right hand was withered, saying: "Stretch forth thy hand." Who is such a one? Hear St. Chrysostom: "The hand not giving alms is withered." Let the hand be extended especially on the Lord's day. Such was the custom in the time of the apostles (St. Paul, 1 Cor. 16). "On the first day of the week, let every one of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him, that when I come the collections be not then to be made." He included every one; there was no exception. After over three hundred years this custom which had fallen into disuse was again revived in a powerful sermon by St. Chrysostom. "Wisely," said he, "did the apostle order collections on Sunday, because on that day we received very many benefits from God. On that day, by the resurrection of Christ, we have been resuscitated and made immortal; on that day we receive the Holy Ghost," etc. A type of this were the loaves of propitiation which every Sabbath were placed on a clean table before the Holy of holies, by which is indicated that we should by alms enter the house of God, for through it we enter heaven. St. Jerome says that the man whose hand was withered was a stone-mason and was much in need of that hand to earn a living. Wherefore, the rich are more in need of extending a charitable hand to the poor that they may obtain grace for themselves and build a tabernacle in heaven.

IV. He cured the blind man by placing clay on his eyes and sending him to the pool of Siloe. Who is this blind

one? St. Augustine says: "The human race is this blind man." This blindness came to the first man through sin. Every man born in ignorance of all things is that blind man. He should have the sight restored on Sunday through the frequent hearing of the Word of God, which he calls clay, made from spittle and earth; spittle is the Word of God; clay is the preacher. The custom of preaching on the Lord's day dates from the time of the Apostles. "And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them" (Acts 20:7). "But the next Sabbath day, the whole city almost came together to hear the Words of God" (Acts 13:44). St. Clement commands the same thing saying: "How can he be excused before the Lord, who does not hear the salutary Word of God on Sunday?" St. Augustine tells how he was wont to hear St. Ambrose preaching every Sunday. The church did not make it of precept to hear sermons on Sunday for all did not need them. Nevertheless, the custom of the church of having sermons always in very many places seems to have a certain force of law. Certainly Christ teaches that he does not wish to know those who do not hear the Word of God.

V. He healed the sick man at the pool, whom he ordered to rise, take up his bed and walk. Who is such a one unless the man who is too weak to do good works. That pool fitly represents the Holy Mass into which the angel of Christ descends, moving the water, that is, recalling his passion to our minds, and in a certain way renewing it. It has blushing waters from the passion of Christ as the pool had from the blood of immolated sheep. Here the weak are strengthened and healed; for the Mass gives man strength and blessing to perform other actions, especially if during it he communicates spiritually by meditation on the mystery. If formerly the sight of the brazen serpent could cure the Hebrews from snake-bites, why cannot also the sacrifice of the Mass, containing Christ crucified, heal our maladies? The early Christians were accustomed to communicate every Sunday. Afterwards it was ordered that they should at least be present and communicate spiritually through faith and desire and humility; that they should place themselves, like little dogs, under the table and judge themselves unworthy the bread of children, as the Canaan and the Centurion, who considered his house unworthy for Christ to enter therein. So Magdalene in the house of the Pharisee did not sit at the

banquet, but placed herself at the feet of the Lord. The utility and necessity of this mystery were so evident that the Church in the Council of Agatho, in 506, prescribed that all the faithful should hear Mass on Sundays and holidays. Many ask: Which would we prefer—to hear a sermon or to assist at Mass. Stanislaus Hosius answers: "Which is preferable—to hear the will of God or to do it?" In a sermon we behold the road to heaven; in Mass we receive strength to walk in it. It is necessary, therefore, to do one and not to neglect the other. Therefore, when we know that those things were done by Christ on the Sabbath, it remains for us to embrace them as our guides.

This much we have seen, that Christ the Lord wished us to spend the Sabbath in the healing of the soul in the above five ways. Nor is this wonderful, for the more prudent heathens, following the law of nature, have set aside certain days for curing the ills of the soul. "I have fixed my mind to this as not less pious, to spend some feast-days first free from anger, as dry and abstemious as though I were making days of sobriety and sacrifices of honey," says Plutarch. Could not he and others like him accuse some Christians on the day of judgment? Therefore, whatever the world and the devil may suggest, let us not be hindered from doing those good works; as Christ himself did not cease to heal the sick on the Sabbath, although he knew it was displeasing to the foolish and wicked Jews. Moreover, on account of their hatred, let us study to be intent on those pious actions, as Christ opposed himself to the Jews and confounded their blindness by honoring the Sabbath with the present miracles. Behold yourself afflicted with various ills—cure them on the Sabbath. "Have mercy on your soul, pleasing God" (Eccl. 30). Do not worry because you displease the world and the devil as long as you please God. Therefore, if during the week you have a withered hand, extend it on Sunday; if you have been bent to earth, straighten up to heaven; if you have been dropsical and immersed in the pit of vice, struggle to get out of it on Sunday; if you have been blind and weak, run to the pool of Siloe to receive your sight and health. Christ saw the man with dropsy in a most pitiable and miserable condition and healed him. Do you behold yourself no less miserable and have pity on your soul. Thus we shall hope to pass from the Sunday of time to the Sunday of eternity.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

I. He is most lovable: 1, in form; 2, in speech; 3, in virtue. II. He has the greatest love for us: 1, because he was made man for us; 2, he is our Physician and Master; he is our food in the Eucharist, and there turns to us. III. As man he is like us.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Matt. 22: 37).

It is a common saying that love descends, not ascends. Experience proves this in parents from whom a strong love descends to their children; but it does not ascend with like ardor from children to parents. Parents treasure their children, but not children their parents. We must confess that the same thing happens with Christ the Lord, our common Parent, whose love descends to us, but does not ascend from us to him. Christ burns too much with love for us, and we, alas! are too cold in returning it. What base ingratitude! What is the remedy for this? The Lord says: "Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them" (Luke 12: 24). Pliny writes that he saw a raven piling up stones in the form of a bucket, in which the rain remained, so that he might stand on this pile of stones to drink the water which he could not otherwise touch with his bill. Let us imitate this industry, and, that our love may ascend to our Redeemer, cast into our heart some stones on which we may stand to return his love, since, as St. Anthony says, nothing should be placed before the love of Christ. We say elsewhere that there are three things which excite love in us: the lovable object itself, some likeness between the lover and the beloved, and reciprocal love. As all these are in God, they are in Christ also, and they urge us to love him, and they are clearly meant in these words: "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God." He is God—behold the object of our love; He is our Lord—behold the likeness; He is the Lord—behold reciprocal love.

I. Christ is to be loved because he is most lovable, not only as God; as such he must be loved above all things as the highest good, the highest wisdom, power and majesty; but also as man, for as such he is in a way God corporate, because in his humanity, as in a mirror, his divinity is reflected, and the fulness of all graces is contained. His form and comeliness make him lovable, according to the proverb: "What is beautiful is lovable." That Christ excelled in elegance of form and in dignity of countenance is the common opinion of theologians, and is indicated in Ps. 44: "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men." St. Jerome thinks this, among others, the reason why the apostles so quickly followed him. St. Chrysostom thinks this was the cause of the contention among the crowd who held him, lest he depart. Mark 5: "They were attached to him," he says, "some loving him, admiring and wishing to remain always with him. For as he was wonderful in working miracles, so he was most beautiful to behold." If in his mortal state he was so beautiful as to draw beholders to himself, what must he have been in his resurrection, and what will he be now in glory, where the beauty of his countenance gladdens the eyes of the saints?

Grace of speech or eloquence renders one lovable, and that this was the highest in Christ is gathered from Ps. 44, where it is said: "Grace is poured abroad in the lips." And St. Luke testifies, saying: "And they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth" (4: 22). The ministers sent to seize Christ were seized by him, by the virtue of his speech, for they said to the high priests: "Never did any man speak like this man" (John 7: 46). Peter and his disciples so hung on his words that they could not leave him. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6: 69). St. Bernard says: "They clung to him, delighted by his speech and countenance, whose voice is sweet and whose countenance is comely." Finally, virtues make one lovable, those especially which come into the conversation of men, such as affability, humility, innocence, kindness, mercy, etc. But what was more affable than Christ, who most lovingly received little ones coming to him, embracing them, placing his hands on

them and blessing them? who did not hesitate to touch the lepers; who was wont to most sweetly console the afflicted and raise their spirits by a word, as when he said to the paralytic: "Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee;" and to the widow mourning her son: "Weep not;" who deigned to call his disciples sons and brothers; who did not refuse to go to the sick—"I will come and heal him." What more innocent than he who knew not sin? not only did no injury to any one, but chided his disciples wishing to do so. His gentleness was incredible according to Isaias: "The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench" (42:3). For when the Pharisees, jealous of his miracles, planned to destroy him, he calmed their fury and continued to heal many of those who followed him. Was not the woman taken in adultery a bruised reed, accused by the Jews, who sought her death? and whose crime he did not hold up to the gaze of the people, but so hid it that, bending down, he wrote with his finger on the ground; but what did he write? Surely the accusation of the Pharisees, which could be easily destroyed, as though by this writing he wished to say: "It is well; I shall inscribe your accusation on tablets, but on such where it will be easily erased." See his kindness in absolving the woman. "Woman, where are they that accused thee? Hath no man condemned thee?" Who said: "No man, Lord." And Jesus said: "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, sin no more" (John 8:10, 11). Some say that he wrote on the ground, so that by doing something else he pretended not to hear what her accusers were saying. But when the accusers were gone he stood up.

St. Ambrose admiringly says: "See the gentleness of Christ; when the woman is accused, he bows his head, and raises it only when her accuser is gone; so that he wishes no one to be condemned, but all to be forgiven." Finally, he did not revenge himself on his enemies, so that after his resurrection he did not even mention any injury he had received. There was nothing more liberal; he opened to all his bosom of mercy, to give them what they wished. "What will you that I shall do for you?" he said to a certain one. He sent no one away who sought anything. Such is our Beloved, that for the rest I am silent." And who will not love this man? Who, with the crowd, will not seize him and make him king?

II. Because he has most deeply loved us and showered so many blessings on us, that by these as chains he might draw men to mutually love him as he foretold by Osee: "And I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bonds of love, and I will be to them as one that taketh off the yoke from their jaws, and I put his meat to him that he might eat" (11 : 4). By these words seem to be indicated the first benefits conferred on us by Christ. With what love for us he is made Adam, that is man, our flesh and brother, an infant naked, suffering those things which we suffer: hunger, thirst, cold, heat, etc. How great are these! The Creator to descend from his home in heaven to his creatures on earth, the greatest to the smallest; from God to become man; from everything to nothing as it were, for the love of man only. Secondly, by which he wished to become our doctor and leader by word and example, nay more, the doctor of our maladies; and these benefits we justly call the chains of charity. Who will not be drawn to the love of his master, leader and doctor, especially if he understands that he is the most noble, most wise, most humane, who has taught not any art whatever, but the most noble of all, the way to heaven; who has shown the most stupendous examples, who has cured incurable diseases of body and mind, who has come from the remotest land for the sake of the weak. That charity conquers all these by which he gave his own life for miserable dying man to give him life. These words seem pertinent here: "I will be to them as one that taketh off the yoke on their jaws." This is nothing else than what the Apostle says: "The charity of Christ presseth us" (2 Cor. 5 : 14). We are accustomed to urge horses to run more quickly by pulling the bridle on their jaws and by whipping them till they obey us. Christ did the same thing to draw ferocious men to his love, when he himself for us wished to be beaten with stripes, to raise the yoke of the cross on his own shoulders, and, finally, to be lifted up on it. When we hear that the Son of God was scourged for us, burdened with the yoke of the cross to testify his love for us, do not those stripes strike our heart and admonish us to love in return such a lover? to carry the yoke of sweet love placed on our necks? Hear St. Bernard: "Above all things, good Jesus, the chalice which you drank renders you lovable to me, the work of our own redemption. This indeed proves his love for us, more kindly provokes our devotion, more justly de-

mands it, and more vehemently binds it." I ask you: What do you owe him, how much should you love him, who so comforted you in your most bitter griefs, in your various maladies; be of good heart, I will take your sorrows, I will bear your maladies in my body; but you take my health and live. Should you not worship such a Saviour all your life, and love him always most fervently? St. Catherine of Sienna did something like this when she, by divine concession, transferred to herself the pains of her father in purgatory, so that she really suffered them in this life. But how much greater is that which Christ has done? For he has so freed us from the everlasting torments of the soul as well as of the body, that what we should have borne, he himself will bear for us. "Surely he hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Isaias 53 : 4). How is it possible, then, that we can forget him who gave his life for us, and turn to other creatures? Xenophon writes that Tigranes, King of Armenia, with his wife, was put in chains by King Cyrus, and being asked by him what price he was willing to pay for his wife's freedom, replied: "I will freely give my life for her." This so pleased Cyrus that he freed them both. On their journey, Tigranes asked his wife what she thought of the kindness of Cyrus, and she answered: "I did not regard Cyrus, but him who would save me with his life." Hear that, O Christian; you are the spouse of Christ who did not say to you in word that with his life and blood, he would free you from the chains of hell, but in reality did so. Why do you not, therefore, turn your eyes to him alone who gave his life for you? How can you look on the world, the flesh and the devil, and turn away from your Saviour? How can you admit any other lover but him? Thirdly, by which he left himself as food in the Blessed Eucharist, which height of divine love, Osee touches when he says: "And he put meat to him that he might eat." He speaks literally of the manna with which God fed the Hebrews in the desert; allegorically he signifies the Eucharist with which God feeds us in this church and this he does daily. First, while at the voice of the priest, he descends from heaven as often as he is called to the altar, and when we wish he even enters under our roofs. Because he sees that we cannot come into his presence, while we are in this world, he himself comes to us. The affection of the lover is much more greatly inflamed when it is said: Behold, here or there is your beloved, than

if it were said only : He is not far from you. With the finger we can point out our Beloved in the Eucharist. Secondly, while he hides and encloses his glory and splendor, under such a common covering, as the species of bread and wine, for our good and reward. How could he annihilate himself more and show his love ? Thirdly, while he comes down to us with no other object than to be our food, to dwell among us and to be intimately united to us. What more beautiful and efficacious love-charm could love and our lover find ? And who will not grow warm by the strength of that charm ? Truly that food is a pledge of the eternal banquet which he has prepared for his followers ; there he will reveal the sweetness which here lies hidden. Christ, therefore, is to be loved, because he is Our Lord, who bought us, who feeds us, and who rewards us in heaven.

III. Because he was made man like to us, not of necessity but by his will and the impulse of love. Hence, David called him by his proper name : "his Lord." "The Lord said to my Lord," as Christ convinces the Jews in to-day's gospel. In other parts of Scripture he is properly called "our God" as in Deut. 6 : 64 : "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." And in Ps. 66 : 6 : "May God our God bless us, may God bless us." Behold the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, and the second person "our God" properly called, as also the Church acknowledges, which commonly calls him by the name "Our Lord," as in the Creed : "And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord." He is ours because he is our Father, for so he is called by Isaias 9 : 6 : "The Father of the Word to come" ; because by his death he has brought us forth to grace, which is the life of the soul ; because he has instructed us by his evangelical doctrine to a newness and holiness of life ; because he has merited for us a right to eternal life. Do not think that this is a title of honor only, for the same Holy Spirit that dwelt in Christ is sent to us by God, by whose aid we as sons can safely have recourse to God and cry out : "Abba, Father." Secondly, because he is our brother by our human nature assumed by him. Hence, he is called by the Apostle : "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8). And he himself calls his disciples : "his brethren" (John. 20). Thirdly, because he is our Spouse, for by faith and Baptism he has espoused us and has given us the ring of his grace. The love of brothers is great, of children and parents, greater, of husband and wife, greatest.

Although for no other reason should the charity of Christ urge us to love him, it should at least for this, that since by his nature he was God, he wished by mere kindness and benevolence to be our brother, that he might communicate to us his paternal patrimony and share it with us. Some brothers are wont to be envious of one another on account of a common heritage, though they are of the same condition, as Esau of Jacob, Cain of Abel. On the contrary, the Son of God, that he might share his paternal goods with us alike, though we had no claim to them, introduced himself into our brotherhood. But if this as yet seems little, we are still beholden to him as Father who did not recreate us as easily as he created us ; not by one word alone, but by many and immense sorrows, and by his very death bought us life, who, that he might infuse into us the breath of life, gave up his own spirit. And if this is not enough, know that Christ is your Spouse who loves you and your flesh, and wishes to be loved by you in like manner. Nor has he bought you with a mean price, but with his blood, so that you can truly say what Sephora said to Moses : " A bloody spouse art thou to me" (Exod. 4 : 25). Because you are bought by his blood, you should shed your blood rather than offend him. Nor does it matter that he has other spouses beside you. For while the sun shines for all, it shines no less for you, than if it shone for you alone ; so also Christ, although he loves others besides you, he does not therefore love you less, because he is infinite and inexhaustible. St. Cyprian says : " O man, you are sufficient for God, let God be sufficient for you." St. Paul says : " If any one does not love our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (Cor. 1 : 16). On the other hand : " Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephes. 6 : 24).

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

PARALYTICS IN SOUL.

I. All mortals after the fall of our first parents. II. All sinners. III. Avaricious and misers. IV. Lazy and negligent. V. The souls in purgatory.

"And behold, they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed" (Matt. 9 : 2).

A WONDERFUL offering, my brethren, a stupendous gift which in to-day's gospel the Capharnaites offer to Christ their guest. A man paralyzed, deprived of the use of hands and feet and all his members, lying in a bed. What do you do, O citizens? Did not God in the Old Law order you not to offer him a weak sacrifice, full of defects? Did he not say through Malachias: "If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it to thy prince, if he will be pleased with it, or if he will regard thy face, saith the Lord of hosts (1 : 8). Wonderful, therefore, is this offering, but pleasing to Christ the Lord, whose food is the conversion of sinners. This is his hunting; this wild beast is flesh which our heavenly Isaac freely eats, and of which the Lord said once to his disciples: "I have a food to eat which you know not of;" the soul, namely, of the Samaritan woman, like the soul of the weak paralytic, whose salvation he then sought. The Capharnaites saw the Lord take from their midst and in a manner devour all the ills of the sick; therefore, to-day on his coming into their town, they bring him a paralytic as a most agreeable morsel. Rightly, therefore, should the infirm be brought to the Lord while he remains in our city, while as yet in this world, he is waiting for sinners to do penance; for in the next world he will not receive them. There he will say what he has already said by Malachias: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts: and I will not receive a gift at

your hand." Therefore, let us bring our weak and infirm to Christ; let us offer him our paralyses, while he remains with us. Let us see who are paralytics in soul.

I. Paralytics are all mortals after the fall of our first parents. For when our first parents lost original justice, which as a golden bridle restrained all the passions of the soul, held them within bounds, and subjected them to reason as the flesh to the spirit, then when that bridle was taken off, they with their posterity fell into a certain languor, a paralysis, a dissolution of all the members, senses and passions, which like an animal let loose began to indulge in evil desires; they became wild, and only by the greatest labor can they be restrained. "For I do not that good which I will, but the evil which I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15); that is to say: I desire to move my members and passions to the right according to the law of reason, and they turn to the left according to the law of concupiscence, carnal and beastly. As the members of a paralytic scarcely ever do anything right, so also the powers of a paralytic soul are easily prone to evil, but with great difficulty to do good. We have a figure of this in Agar the handmaid, and Sara the wife of Abraham. Agar quickly and easily brought forth a son, Ismael, but he was a bad and wild man; Sara with difficulty gave birth to Isaac who was good and obedient. We are Agar in bad deeds, and Sara in good ones. But what is the remedy for this paralysis? Through the grace of Christ we can be restored to our original state. Therefore we should be brought to Christ and his Church, by Baptism; then we should rise from our sins by the Sacrament of Penance; after this, take up our bed, not yielding to our former conversation and evil desires, but conquering them; finally by going into our house and progressing in virtue, and striving to reach that perfection which we had in paradise, whence we were expelled, and which we can obtain by the frequent and worthy use of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

II. All sinners, especially inveterate ones. Paralysis is a relaxing of the nerves, so that man cannot use the members touched by it, nor can he walk nor labor. Sin effects this in the soul of man, so that he cannot move one step towards heaven, nor accomplish anything worthy of heaven. As the Egyptians in their utter darkness were unable to move from place to place, and feared to do so lest they should meet with destruction; so men placed in the darkness of sin can do

nothing of themselves, only lie in their vileness ; without the light of divine grace, they cannot rise nor perform one meritorious act. The nerve of merit—grace—is relaxed in them and cut. The Egyptians in their darkness, as though bound by chains, could do nothing but cry out, and in a piteous voice call for help ; so sinners bound by the chains of their crimes, can only implore the help of God, since they can merit nothing. If the Egyptians started a fire, it was either extinguished by the wind or overcome by the thickest darkness. Solomon says : "And no power of fire could give them light, neither could the bright flame of stars enlighten them that horrible night" (Wisdom 17 : 5). In like manner, the good works which one in a state of sin wishes to perform, are either impeded by the devil, or at least are obscured and deprived of the favor of God, overcome by sins more than by that darkness which obscured everything. More than others, inveterate sinners are considered paralytic because they are by no means bound by the nerves and chains of the fear of God. Of such Jeremias says : "How long wilt thou be dissolute in deliciousness, O wandering daughter ?" (31 : 22), that is, how long will you spend your life dissolute and prone to every crime ? how long will you wander outside yourself and your God ? And these seem to lie not in an ordinary but in an iron and immovable bed like the one Og, King of Basan, had, thirteen feet long and six feet wide. What is that iron bed, but the obstinate habit of sinning, by which St. Augustine bewails he was at one time bound. "I panted," he says, "bound not by a strange iron but by my iron will. The enemy held my will and then made a chain for me and bound me. From a perverse will sensuality was created, then habit, then necessity. And painful slavery by these held me captive." That bed of the sinner, especially the libertine, noted in that iron one of Og, is beautifully described by Alphonsus Tostatus, Bishop of Abul : "Og in Hebrew is the same as accumulating, and signifies the sinner who piles up sins upon sins, until he comes to the bottomless pit of evil ; for sin, for which he seeks no remedy through Penance, soon gathers to itself worse companions, until he becomes a dwelling for every unclean spirit, especially luxury in which like Og in the bed he sleeps undisturbed." However, he must not despair, even in this paralysis. What must he do ? The Lord indicates three things : "Rise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." First, rise to God by prayer

and a constant imploring of his grace. St. Augustine becoming anxious about his conversion, one day stretched under a tree, and with tears prayed: "And you, O Lord, how long? Will you be angry to the last? Do not remember my former iniquities." Meanwhile he heard a voice saying: "Take and read, take and read." He took up a book and read the words of St. Paul: "not in riotings and drunkenness, not in chamberings and impurities," etc. Soon after he was converted. Secondly, take up your bed, by exercising the virtues opposed to your vices; temperance to intemperance, almsgiving to stealing, modesty to immodesty, so that you may overcome habit by habit. Thirdly, go into your house, by a strong, constant and frequently repeated resolution of the mind that you wish to depart from your evil ways and go into the house from which you fled.

III. Avaricious and misers. Although these are not paralytics in other members, in the hands, at least, they are deprived of power; a type of whom was that man with the withered hand who was healed by Christ. The hand of the avaricious is withered, because it has not the moisture of charity and mercy. St. Chrysostom says: "The hand not giving alms is withered. That which steals is wicked and vile. Let no one eat with such hands." Does it not seem to you that the glutton who refused Lazarus the crumbs from his table had withered hands? And since he himself would not extend his hand to feed Lazarus, so neither did Abraham wish to extend his hand to quench his thirst in the fires of hell; and because he would not give to Lazarus begging, he must at length beg from Lazarus. "Send Lazarus," etc. St. Jerome says that that man whose hand the Lord healed was a stonemason who had special need of that hand to earn a living. There is nothing that the rich need more than a liberally extended hand, by which they may obtain the grace of God and build for themselves eternal dwellings in heaven. Since, then, they should be builders, let them see above all things that they have not withered hands with which to destroy and not build up their home in heaven, like that rich man who said: "I will pull down my barns and will build greater." He extends his barns to store his plentiful crops, but he does not extend his hand. He destroyed his barns, and he heard from the Lord: "Thou fool!" But if he had extended his hand to the poor and there stored his crops, he would have built a much greater

barn for himself in heaven. There is only this remedy left to the miser, what God said to the man with the withered hand: "Rise and stand in the middle and stretch forth thy hand." Rise from the table of avarice with Matthew, the usurer, then, standing in the middle, be content with the golden mean and you will not have too much, and you will not want; finally, stretch forth your hand to the poor; do not draw it back, because the Lord said: "It is a more blessed thing to give rather than receive" (Acts 20 : 35). You ask the reason. First, because "to give is a sign of abundance; to receive is a sign of want," says St. Augustine. The generosity of the giver is more blessed than the poverty of the receiver; the former is a sign of liberality, the latter of necessity or avarice. Secondly, because the love of the benefactor to the one benefited is greater than the love of this one to him. So children are more loved by parents than parents by children. Thirdly, because the giver is freer; the receiver is under an obligation. Fourthly, because he who gives is more honorable than he who receives. Fifthly, because it is more useful to give than to receive. He who gives, gives temporal and corporeal things, and in return receives eternal and spiritual goods.

IV. The lazy and negligent. Those who are slow and sluggish with regard to divine things and the worship of God. They seem to have paralysis in their feet who are always among the late-comers to church. It is said that in the island of Java there are birds without feet that always rest in trees. Will we be doing an injury to such paralytics if we call them feetless, although they possess them; but, nevertheless, they do not use them for the glory of God nor for their own salvation? Others have no hands, or they are paralyzed, since throughout the whole year they make no offering to the altar. When there is question of offending God, honoring the devil, preparing for worldly display, there is no delay and no thought of expense. See the Hebrews. When they were in the desert, they begged Aaron to make gods for them, and in order to turn them from their madness he asked them to give him their gold earrings, women and children alike, thinking that they would not part with such precious jewels; but wickedness and preposterous liberality overcame them, and they brought them to him. But when something is to be brought to the altar of God they sadly bewail their fate. They have always will-

ing hands for pleasure and luxuries, but when there is question of promoting the service of God they have no hands, they are paralytics. When gold or other precious jewels are used to ornament the church, they seem indignant like Alexander, the Roman Emperor, who would not allow a particle of gold in the temple, saying: "Of what use is gold in the temple?" And this in order to hide his avarice. Others seem paralyzed in the whole body, who spend Sundays and holidays even in sleep and laziness, tied to the bed like the paralytic in the gospel. Hence not only precious time is lost, but also divine things; and the habit of laziness, like that of paralysis, is contracted, by which man becomes slothful in every good and honest work and prone to evil, because, as Cato says: "In doing nothing we learn to do evil." What is the remedy for this paralysis? That which Christ said to the paralytic: "Rise," and order yourself from the table of laziness, because you lie not so much in a bed as in a grave. "The laziness of a living man is his tomb," says Themistocles. If you were to lie in a pit which became filled with snakes, how quickly you would rise. But is it not more dangerous to lie in sin than in such a place? Rise, therefore, go to work, and if you are weak, implore God for strength. Then take up your bed and force yourself to labor and good works. Progress in work renders it light. In the beginning David could not carry the arms of Saul, not being used to it; but becoming accustomed to military life, he not only could carry arms but he knew how to wield the ponderous sword of Goliath. Finally, "go into your house." What house? The house of eternity. "Man shall go into the house of his eternity" (Eccl. 12: 5). Go, therefore, in mind to your grave, to the tribunal of judgment, to the house of joy or of weeping, and then begin to rest.

V. To these let us add an extra, the souls in purgatory. Of these the same thing must be said that the centurion said to Christ: "Lord, my boy lies at home a paralytic and is badly troubled." The poor souls are boys on account of their innocence, free from fault, however, not yet from punishment. They lie on a burning bed in a house of horror and vast solitude. There is nothing to see but torments, nothing to hear but groans, nothing to taste but bitterness, nothing to touch but fire. O sorrowful house! And what kind are the souls who dwell there? All paralytics, deprived of all

use of their members, that is, the power of meriting, because when life is over they are beyond the state of meriting. Therefore, they cannot help themselves, cannot turn from side to side, nor raise the hand to the mouth ; they depend entirely on others and wait for our aid. Finally, they are sadly tormented with a twofold and most bitter torment. The first comes from the pain of the damned, which in a fourfold manner brings grief to them. First, they see that for a time they are deprived of the highest good, and in that time in which they should enjoy it. Most earnestly do they seize the immensity of that good, and most ardently they desire it. Secondly, they see that on account of their fault they are kept away from it. Thirdly, because in time they neglected to satisfy for their fault when they could easily have done so. Fourthly, because they neglected to acquire the immense treasure of heavenly goods and degrees of heavenly glory. The second comes from the pain of sense which for a threefold reason is most bitter. First, on account of the intensity of the fire of purgatory, which, according to the Fathers, is far greater than the fire on earth. Secondly, on account of duration. For there are very many souls detained there for a long time, as the Church indicates on All Souls' Day. The pain of fire in this life cannot be long ; but there it will be, because the soul can neither die nor lose the strength and vivacity of the senses. Thirdly, on account of continuance in the same state. Tortures in this life gradually grow moderate as the animal spirits weaken little by little ; not so in the other life, where the soul does not use the aid of the spirits, but by itself immediately suffers the strength of tortures. In the sorrows of this life there is frequent interruption by sleep, by the conversation of friends, by various distractions, of the mind. None of these in purgatory. What, therefore, is to be done with these paralytics? They can merit nothing, they cannot come to us, they cannot call out to us. Should we not then in their stead, after the example of the centurion, go to Christ, beseeching him : " Lord, our boys, our brothers, our parents, are lying in the house unable to move and greatly tormented." Should we not imitate those men who carried the paralytic and placed him at the feet of Jesus ? Let us, therefore, stand together, break through the roof of heaven by our prayers and other pious works, until at length we can carry our parents, brothers and sisters, into the presence of God and join them for all eternity.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THREEFOLD MARRIAGE OF CHRIST.

I. With human nature. II. With the Church. III. With the soul of each of the faithful.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son" (Matt, 22:2).

We have heard in to-day's gospel, that the king's son was married; but who was his spouse? The Fathers who explain this parable, assign a threefold one. Some say human nature which the Son of God united to himself; others the Church which he wedded on the Cross; others, the soul of each of the faithful which he espoused in Baptism; and after falling, in Penance. That threefold promise of espousals made by God corresponds with the threefold espousal of Christ: "And I will espouse thee to me for ever: and I will espouse thee to me in justice and judgment and in mercy and in commiserations. And I will espouse thee to me in faith: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Osee 2:19).

I. The Son of God contracted marriage with human nature when he united it to himself hypostatically in his divine nature. St. Gregory so understands to-day's parable: "When the divine Word assumed human nature, then the Father made a marriage for his Son, when he joined him to human nature in the womb of the Virgin." Not in a common but in a new and wonderful manner, for in the marriage of human beings two persons are united; in this, however, not two persons but two natures in one person only are united. The messenger between the two was the Archangel Gabriel persuading the consent of the Virgin, to give from her immaculate and virginal womb her flesh as a spouse to the Son of God.

This marriage is to be admired, first, because the bridegroom was of the highest and divine majesty; the spouse, on the contrary, of the lowest condition and misery, removed by an infinite distance from the dignity of the bridegroom. For although the flesh which Christ received from the Virgin was pure and free from all stain, however it was subject to other miseries which men suffer, sickness and mortality, for nature itself in all men except the Mother of God was corrupt and abominable on account of original sin. Men very often enter marriage on account of the beauty of the spouse, or on account of riches or nobility of birth. None of these was in the human nature which the Son of God espoused; but rather of itself it was deformed, poor and ignoble. The Ethiopian whom Moses married was a type of these espousals (Exod. 2: 21). St. Bernard says: "What so much shows his mercy than that he took on him misery itself?" But the Son of God knew how to render his spouse beautiful, rich and noble. Secondly, because a wonderful union was effected in this marriage. In other marriages there are two persons united in one flesh; but in this, not two persons, but two natures in one person are united—namely, the divine and the human; the divine which, like a most powerful giant, sustains the human hypostatically, as it is well called by David, first a bridegroom, then a giant: "He as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way" (Ps. 18: 6). Hence, the expression that the Word received communication from both natures and was called the God-man, immortal and mortal, immense and small, etc. St. Damascene says: "When we speak of the person, whether we name it from both parts together or from one only, we attribute to it the qualities of each nature. For Christ, which word embraces both, is called God and Man, created and uncreated, passible and impassible. But since on one side the Son of God is called God, he received the qualities of the joined nature, that is, the flesh. For God is called passible, and the Lord of glory is nailed to the cross not as God but as man. In the same manner as man he is called the Son of man and has received the qualities and adornments of the divine essence. The boy is said to be older than time, and man is without a beginning; not indeed as mere boy and man, but as God the boy was created before all time. And this is the manner of communication: by each nature, namely, communicating its qualities to the other, because they constitute

one and the same person, they mutually merge into each other." Thirdly, because the bond is made indissoluble. Death cuts the tie of other marriages, not so the bond of the divine Word with human nature, both as to the body and to the soul. Although death separated the soul of Christ from the body for three days, it could not, however, separate the soul or the body from the divine Word. For what the Word once assumed it never laid aside. Fourthly, because the perfection and consummation of this marriage contrary to the order of nature, was made in the passion and death of Christ, and, therefore, on the bed of the cross when he said: "It is consummated." Then he was made "Father of future ages," and merited to receive a most choice and numerous offspring, the Church, of which Isaias said: "If he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed" (53 : 10). Human flesh, his spouse bore him this seed or offspring, after he poured forth water and blood from his side, to which Isaias seems to have alluded when he said: "Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side" (60 : 4). A type of this was shown by God in paradise, when from the side of Adam sleeping, his spouse Eve was formed; so by the death of Christ, the Church redeemed was born and instituted, formed and sanctified. Hence, we see how much we are indebted especially to God the Father who made this marriage for his Son with a spouse so abject, urged merely by his great love for man. "For God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son" (John. 3 : 16). Then to his Son our Lord, who did not repudiate such a vile spouse, but by his most cruel death regenerated her to a life of grace and glory. Truly we are the children of sorrow, who have oppressed with sorrows and put to death our parent. But most of all we are indebted to the Mother of God who to contract this marriage, gave, by consenting, her immaculate flesh as a spouse when she said: "Be it done unto me according to thy word;" if she had not given her consent, this marriage would not have taken place.

II. The Son of God celebrated his wedding with the Church when he espoused her on the cross. This by very many is understood to be the meaning of this parable. St. Jerome says: "God makes a marriage for Christ and the Church which was composed of Jews and Gentiles." Of this spouse, St. John Baptist speaks when he says of Christ: "He that hath a bride is the bridegroom" (3 : 28). And

St. Paul: "This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Ephes. 5 : 32). This marriage was made and ratified on the cross, and will be consummated and perfected on the day of judgment when he will raise it, in his elect, from earth and introduce it into his heavenly bridal chamber. The messenger of this marriage was John Baptist, when by his testimony, baptism and preaching, he disposed and prepared the Jews to embrace the faith of Christ. This is a stupendous marriage, because in it a most noble bridegroom received a spouse not only vile and common, but also foul and abominable, defiled by numerous and weighty sins: of whom Rebecca bore a type when, seated on a camel, she was brought to her spouse Isaac, as St. Ambrose notes. As Rebecca, at the sight of her spouse Isaac, taking her cloak, quickly covered herself; so the Church, says St. Gregory, "covered herself with a cloak, because having seen the Lord, she was ashamed of the actions of her weakness; and not without reason, for before she was washed by her spouse, she was vile and deformed." Do you wish to hear of her deformity? Listen to St. Paul: "For you were heretofore darkness" (Ephes. 5 : 8). What is blacker than darkness? And yet he gave himself for one deformed as though beautiful, aimable and admirable. Wondering at this the Apostle says: "For scarce for a just man will one die" (Rom. 5 : 7). "And since he had received such a one, he adorns and cleanses her" (St. Chrysostom). The wife of Moses was also a type, who was an Ethiopian black and deformed, yet she was named Sephora, that is beautiful according to the Chaldaic; and as the Church is called, "black but beautiful" (Cant. 1), because what was before black and deformed afterwards is made beautiful by her Spouse. Secondly, because he bought her with his blood. It was the custom formerly among the Hebrews and even the Gentiles that the bridegrooms should buy their spouses from their parents and from themselves. So David bought Michol, the daughter of Saul; Jacob bought Rachel by serving her seven years. This custom existed among many nations of the earth. Christ the Son of God bought his spouse the Church, not by conflict nor by service, much less by money, but with his most precious blood; he even gave himself for her; nor was he content with a single shedding of blood—he poured it forth to the last drop. Who will not be dumfounded at this? Thirdly, because he showed a

wonderful love for his spouse and suffered from it, to conquer her and to draw her to himself. Those who intend marrying look for reciprocal love from their affianced and strive to cultivate it by kindness and costly presents, and bearing patiently with sudden outbursts of temper. All these Christ did and bore in order to win the love of his spouse. He went around everywhere through the Synagogues of Jerusalem and in these uttered the sweetest and most heavenly words—words of eternal life—"so that they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded from his mouth." He gave his spouse gifts when he fed the multitude with the best and most nourishing food; he healed all kinds of diseases; he raised the dead; he forgave sins and performed innumerable miracles. Then from her he bore all manner of injury—spitting, scourging; he received from her a crown of thorns, was nailed to the cross and there died for her; nay, he received all these as gifts from his spouse and "who having joy set before him, endured the cross." Finally, on the cross, he prayed for this wicked and ungrateful spouse, and extended his arms to embrace her, and dying, bowed his head to kiss her. Fourthly, because he communicated to his spouse himself and all he possessed—his merits, examples of virtue, heavenly wisdom, his prayers, labors, sufferings and finally his name, so that from Christ or anointed we should be called Christians, as wives are accustomed to take the names of their husbands. Eliezer, the servant of Abraham and messenger between Isaac and Rebecca, when the marriage contract was signed, immediately brought gifts to the new spouse: "And bringing forth vessels of silver and gold and garments, he gave them to Rebecca for a present" (Gen. 24 : 53). Certainly a figure of the liberality of Christ, with which he was to endow his spouse the Church as St. Ambrose teaches: "When the Church was espoused, she received gold and silver vases in which is the treasure of faith;" as though Christ did not seem to love his Church enough unless he made her wealthy. Finally, he gave himself to his spouse as food; as intimately as possible he was joined to her, and he most familiarly conversed with her. "Thus in holy communion between the Word and the soul," says St. Bernard, "as though between two friends, there is familiar converse. Pride departs where affection reigns. Where the beloved is, the master and king disappear, dignity is put aside, reverence takes its place. The language of the Word—the favor

of majesty ; the language of the soul—the fervor of devotion." Finally the love and generosity of other couples often last for a short time only ; but the love and generosity of Christ for his Church know no end, and on the day of judgment they will be exposed to view when the Bridegroom will come in his splendor to bring his spouse into his kingdom, as the parable of the coming of the bridegroom indicates (Matt. 25).

III. He made a marriage with the soul of each faithful one when he espoused it in Baptism by faith and love. " For I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11 : 2). But that spouse does not always remain bound to Christ by the twofold bond of faith and charity ; for in some of the faithful, those in a state of sin, there is the bond of faith only, who as bondwomen are not loved. The son of Sara was heir to all his father's possessions, the son of Agar received from his father a few movable gifts. So those who cling to Christ by faith and charity are the heirs to his heavenly kingdom ; but those who cling by faith only, receive temporal goods only. This marriage also is to be admired. First, because it is the marriage of the Son of God, with a vile and miserable creature, his handmaid. Lest on account of this disparity there should be any discord, the bridegroom annihilated himself and put on the form of a servant, so that his spouse without diffidence might cling to him as her equal. Her humble origin he decorated with his nobility ; her poverty he enriched with his treasures. Secondly, he held all in common with his spouse : his power, wisdom and honor, even the Father himself, as she was called the daughter of God and co-heir of the Bridegroom. Hence in the Canticles he is said to communicate his goods to her : " Flowers have appeared in our land," that is, in my land and that of my spouse. St. Bernard says : " The expression, 'in our land,' plainly does not denote sovereignty but partnership, familiarity, as though a bridegroom, and not the Lord, says this." Thirdly, this marriage, this love on the part of the bridegroom is perpetual and indissoluble as long as the spouse does not repudiate it. St. Augustine says : " Let not the spouse fear that she will be deserted by the bridegroom ; he does not destroy his pledge. What pledge did he give ? He shed his blood ; he sent the Holy Spirit. If he did not love his spouse, he would not have given such proof of it." Fourthly, the Bridegroom is united to the soul when, in Holy Communion, he enters the

heart, where they become as two in one flesh, and where he communicates to her his spirit and virtues according to the Words of Christ: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him" (John. 6 : 57). St. Laurence Justinian says: "The Lord Jesus has given his spouse as a pledge of his love the sacrament of his body and blood, that they might be one, not only in spirit but in flesh also." Since these things are so, let each one of the faithful see how much he owes to Christ the Bridegroom. St. Bernard says: "Whence this to you, O human soul, whence such inestimable glory as to merit to be his spouse whom the angels desire to look upon? Whence this that you should be the spouse of him whom the sun and moon admire, at whose beck worlds are changed? What will you render to the Lord for all that he has done for you? Who has made you the companion of his table, the partner of his kingdom? You are espoused to him and the wedding feast is spread in heaven; there wine will not be lacking; we shall be filled with the fulness of the house of God, and shall drink of the torrent of his delights.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

FRUIT OF TRIBULATION.

I. Tribulation purifies: 1. From filth already contracted; 2. From punishment due to sin; 3. From filth of sins by chance to be contracted. II. It illuminates; 1. It causes us to see what is above us; 2. To see what is below us; 3. To see what is around us; 4. To see what is in us. III. It perfects; 1. It disposes to virtue; 2. It stimulates to progress in virtue, 3. It perseveres in virtue and grace.

"He went to him and prayed him to come down and heal his son" (John. 4:47).

At a banquet formerly, Samson proposed this riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges 14:14). What does this mean? Samson had killed a lion and found in his mouth a honeycomb. And this is the solution of the riddle: honey from the mouth of a lion. But we can in a mystical sense otherwise solve this riddle and especially from to-day's gospel. Is not death or deathly sickness a fierce lion? It had already begun to devour the ruler's son: "for he was at the point of death;" and yet from this lion sweetness came forth, because the affliction of the son was the conversion of the father. While the lion eats the son, the father goes to Christ, and thus receives his son and with him salvation:— "And himself believed and his whole house." O gracious lion! O sweet honey! If the lion had not entered the house of this ruler, he would not have believed. The lion gnawed at the house and left there the honeycomb of faith and salvation. But the ruler is not the only one so fortunate; as often as any tribulation, such as hunger, pestilence, sickness, death, enters our homes we seem to behold the lion, but if afterwards we reflect we will see that he bears honey

in his mouth, the incomparable fruit which we shall now contemplate. St. Denis recounts three hierarchical works in which the perfection of the Church is contained : to purify ; to illuminate ; to perfect. Tribulation especially performs all these, and is a wonderful instrument employed by God.

I. It purifies, first from filth already contracted because it makes man return to himself and afterwards to God. Thus the prodigal son, forced by hunger, "returning to himself said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger ? I will arise and will go to my father, etc." (Luke 15 : 17, 18). Thus Jonas fleeing from the face of the Lord, returned to himself in the whale's belly, and bitterly bemoaned his fate. "When my soul was in distress within me, I remembered the Lord" (Jonas 2 : 8). Thus a young man, for example, who has lived a long time in sin, when he falls sick or is cast into prison for some crime, soon begins to return to himself, to call for the priest, to confess his sins, and to promise an amendment of life, partly on account of fear of temporal punishment, partly of eternal death. And this he would never have done if that adversity had not overtaken him. For this reason the Abbot Moses, impelled by the fear of death which awaited him for the crime of homicide, fled to a monastery. Augerius Busbeqius Cæsar, legate of Ferdinand the First to Turkey, relates that when in Asia near the river Halym, he asked a peasant if there were many fishes in that stream, and how they were caught. He replied that there was plenty of fishes, but that they could not be caught, for every time he put his hand in the water they would run away from him. After the laughter had subsided among the legate's followers, one of them produced a net and surprised the Turks by the number of fishes he caught. Often and often the Lord extends his most liberal hand to catch the souls of men but they, like the fishes, flee from him and do not allow themselves to be caught. Hence Habacuc says well : "And thou wilt make them as fishes of the sea" (1 : 14). What, therefore, does the Lord do ? He spreads the net of tribulation over them, in the shape of pestilence, war, famine, etc., and thus draws them against their will to his service. Jeremias testifies to this in the person of Jerusalem, when he says : "From above he hath sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me : he hath spread a net for my feet : he hath turned me back"

(Lament 1 : 13). The same thing happened to Jonas when he fled from the command of the Lord. Secondly, it purifies from the punishment due to sin, if not entirely, at least in part. For as the flail separates the wheat from the chaff, so tribulation separates the soul from combustible matter—the flames of Purgatory. If any chaff adheres to you it will be burnt in Purgatory; if you purify yourself from it while here, there will be nothing to burn, and you will be gathered into the heavenly mansions. Hence God calls his people Israel: "O my thrashing and the children of my floor." (Isaias 21 : 10). Wherefore, to be afflicted by God, is the greatest benefit we can receive here below. St. Augustine says: "If you are gold, why do you fear the fire? If you are wheat, why do you fear the flail? You will not appear what you were in the field unless you are separated from the chaff." Thirdly, it purifies from the possible contracting of the filth of sin; because it urges man not to be idle and not to give himself up to pleasures; for it beats down his flesh and holds captive that ferocious beast concupiscence lest it harm us and draw us into many crimes. As long as the Romans were tormented by their enemy the Carthaginians so long were they warlike and powerful; after they had destroyed Carthage they became dissolute and effeminate and torn by internal strife. In like manner, as long as God harasses us by the movements of his soldiers—famine, war, pestilence, disease, etc., so long will we take care of ourselves and abstain from wickedness and vice. When he ceases to trouble us, then we become worse. Our concupiscence, unless restrained, is like an unmanageable horse bearing us to sure death, according to the words of God: "They are all turned to their own course, as a horse rushing to the battle" (Jer. 8 : 6). What, therefore is the remedy? That which God formerly prescribed to Josue: "Thou shalt hamstring their horses" (Jos. 11 : 6). God therefore hamstrung this horse of ours by famine, pestilence, etc. Then the horse begins to go lame, then ceases all sinful revelry and it appears as though some pestilence had seized the city. As you would not grieve if some one were to seize you by the foot as you were falling into a pit, even though he should dislocate your foot, so it is to be counted a benefit if by temporal afflictions we are seized and prevented from falling into the infernal pit.

II. It illuminates. This is very well represented by the

gall of that fish which by the aid and advice of the angel Tobias took, and to whom the angel said: "Take with thee the gall of the fish, for it will be necessary" (Tob. 11 : 4). With the gall Tobias illumined the eyes of his father, who had been made blind by the filth of swallows. And what is this filth of swallows but the honors, wealth and pleasures of this world? By these man is blinded, and only through tribulation is he illumined, as through contempt, poverty, hunger, sickness, etc., as our first parents then only knew they were naked when they had been despoiled of original justice. St. Gregory says: "The eyes which crime closes, punishment opens." But what does tribulation make us see? First, those things that are above us, God and the saints. Those who in the time of prosperity forget God and his saints in the time of tribulation are accustomed to remember and to have recourse to them, having learned that refuge is to be found in God alone and in the patronage of his saints. Thus the Hebrews when prosperous worshiped false gods, but in adversity they returned to God, as we read in the books of Exodus and Kings. The same thing appears today in the ruler who would not have come to Christ if he had not been afflicted. Lactantius writes of the Gentiles: "They never remembered God unless when they were in trouble. Afterwards, when there was no longer any fear and the evils had vanished, they quickly returned to the temples of their gods and offered sacrifice; but God, whom they had implored in their necessity, they did not thank by even a word." So Julian the Apostate, at the sight of specters, made the sign of the cross, which he otherwise would never have done. So some men, when forced by necessity, remember God. I shall say nothing of the power of God, which can crush the strongest; the justice of God, which at length justly punishes sin; the mercy of God, who even when angry remembers mercy, and "who giveth snow like wool;" that is, he does not send it all at once, to crush us and ours, but after the manner of wool as though carding it; so that it should fall on us gently and sweetly. He does the same with tribulation by not placing it heavily and at once on us, but lightly and by degrees. Secondly, those things that are below us, hell and purgatory. When we suffer from headache or toothache we think and say: good God, what will be the pain of purgatory or hell if the brief pain of one member, with so many remedies at hand, con-

tinues to harass us? What will it be, without any comfort and hope of redemption, to be tortured in hell in all the members and senses? Thirdly, those things that are around us, the world and the things in it. In times of prosperity we scarcely know the world: who is a friend, who is an enemy: which is wheat and which is chaff. But when tribulation comes upon us, then we know who is our friend and God's, and who is not. The wheat remains, the chaff flies away. Then we do not know the good things in this world, because either we rate them too much, or through ingratitude, we do not rate them as much as we should. Or we show too much affection for them, as though they were eternal and could make us happy, and then tribulation shows us how frail and weak they are like a reed staff. How many are there who, having lost the highest honors, wealth and pleasures, descend to the commission of even atrocious crimes. We never think whence our good fortune comes to us, and we are ungrateful to God. When tribulation deprives us of it, then we open our eyes and exclaim: O what a blessing is health! how sweet is peace! how smoothly things went with us when our barns were well filled! Fourthly, those things that are in us: infirmity, blindness, inconstancy, our sins and defects. How many things with Peter do we presumptuously propose which in time of adversity we forget, denying Christ? How blind we are to our defects which we do not see unless through tribulation! The brothers of Joseph did not perceive the crime they committed against him until after they had been afflicted by him, although unknown to them. Then they began to say: "We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother (Gen. 42:21). In like manner the impious Antiochus when stricken with a deadly malady, cried out: "But now I remember the evils which I have done in Jerusalem. I know therefore that for this cause these evils have found me" (1 Mach. 6:12). Malicious ones often point out our sins to us which we ourselves do not see. Philip of Macedon rejoiced that the Athenians were hostile to him, because on account of their accusations he saw his defects and corrected them so as to make liars of his enemies.

III. Tribulation perfects because it leads us to the end for which we were created. First it disposes to all virtues and a fuller grace. Hence the apostle says: "Tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3). It renders man patient and

obedient in all things. As birds of the forest are tamed in a cage, wild horses by the bridle, dogs by the leash ; so man otherwise unruly, by tribulation becomes meek, patient and obedient to God. We often see sick people who before were uncontrollable at length become mild, and suffering patiently: likewise murderers, thieves and robbers subdued in jail ; and if they are led forth to punishment they show themselves meek and humble. Patience is a fruitful soil—tribulation the plow ; and after plowing it bears rich fruit. Blessed Antiochus says: "Unless the wax be softened it will not take the impression of the seal ; so man, unless he be tried, and softened by tribulations cannot receive the impression of the seal of divine grace." "Poverty carried poor Lazarus on to philosophy, grief to virtue, and contempt to patience," says Peter Chrysologus. What causes this beggar deserted by all to suffer hunger patiently, and not curse the rich man, until at length he is borne by the hands of angels to heaven ? Poverty surely and tribulation. In summer time the robin disports himself in fields and woods, seemingly unmindful of man : but when winter comes, he hastens to our doors and windows humbly begging a few crumbs of bread. What makes this bird so tame, and clothes him as it were with another nature unless the winter of adversity ? These things we have before our eyes daily and yet we do not perceive that God is playing the same game with us. How many in time of prosperity, revel in luxury and wealth and boast of it ! But when the winter of adversity comes upon them, they sink to the lowest level and call those friends whom before they would not acknowledge. How many become tame in want who in plenty were wild and hard-hearted. Secondly, it impels to progress in virtue and to the love of God while it forbids worldly things and makes them bitter. "The beauty of the road, while it delights, retards the footsteps of the traveler. The Lord therefore makes the road hard for those traveling to him, lest they, feasting on earthly delights, should prolong their journey," says St. Gregory. No one will delay long on a road infested with robbers. Where there is pleasure, where things are offered at a low price, there the travelers stop. But what are the delights of this world ? only filth ; and the inns only stables ! Therefore God by tribulation teaches us to seek better things : "Lest a traveler tending to his country should choose a stable for his home," says St. Augustine.

Thirdly, it preserves and confirms us in virtue and the love of God. The heat of the sun easily deprives the traveler of his coat; not so the cold northern blast. So prosperity often deprives man of the grace and charity of God, while it opens to him the door to temporal comforts. But adversity, as it were, so wraps up a man that he cannot even if he wished indulge in fleeting pleasures.

Finally, this is the key of heaven itself, as the apostles testify: "That through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14 : 21). With this key Christ himself opened the gate to his glory: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24 : 26).

They therefore err who, when afflicted by various tribulations, consider themselves worse than other men. Christ corrects this error in the Jews when he says: "Or those eighteen upon whom the tower fell in Siloe, and slew them: think you that they also were debtors above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? No, I say, to you: but except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13 : 4, 5). The inhabitants of Melitus judged the Apostle Paul a wicked man because a viper attacked him and clung to his hand. So the friends of Job did not believe him innocent when they saw him covered with so many sores. But they all erred. They would have been more correct had they judged them as children of God, whom they saw so afflicted by the father. "Wherefore, rather consider it a joy, brethren, when you shall suffer many temptations," says James.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THE SOULS IN PURGATORY ARE MOST DESERVING OF AID.

I. Because they are in a most calamitous state. II. Because they cannot help themselves. III. Because they are holy and heirs of heaven. IV. Because they are our brothers and sisters. V. Because they are held captive only on account of the guilt of punishment.

"And cast him into prison till he should pay the debt" (Matt. 18 : 30).

I AM forced, my brethren, to ask you to-day for a very generous alms. There are numberless Christians detained in a certain most cruel prison and bound for certain debts not so great. They are all noble and of the highest family ; nay more, they are your relatives and friends. In that prison they are cruelly tortured, nor can they leave it to seek aid from others. In the name of these, then, I beseech you, brethren. Do you wish to know who they are ? They are the faithful souls detained in purgatory on account of certain debts contracted and not yet redeemed. They are all noble because they are children of God and heirs of heaven, they are your relatives and friends. Their prison is not that into which a wicked servant is thrown never to be released (such means hell), but that into which to-day's gospel says the servant was cast by his master for a debt of one hundred pence. There they are kept by God, a severe judge, nor are they allowed out until they pay the last farthing ; unless you Christians come to their aid. Therefore, open the bowels of your mercy ; but listen first to what I shall say.

I. These souls are most deserving of aid because they are in a most calamitous state, tortured by the two severest pains, that of the damned and of the senses. The former excludes the heirs from that most delightful kingdom prepared for them ; from the presence of a most loving parent,

as Absalom from the sight of his father preferred rather to die than to live. It excludes them from the most delightful companionship of the Angels and Saints, from the gorgeous splendor of heaven and holds them in darkness. The latter afflicts them more gravely than the pains of the martyrs, or the tortures of condemned criminals according to Saint Augustine, St. Gregory, Bede, Anselm, Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, who adds that it is more cruel than the tortures of the suffering Christ. According to the common opinion, the fire of purgatory does not differ in species from the fire of hell; it acts not with natural force, but as the instrument of God. The heavier the stripes, the stronger the one who administers them. The jaw-bone of an ass, in the hand of Samson, slew a thousand men, which in the hand of another would not have killed even a dog. The scourge made of cords in the hand of Christ ejected sheep and oxen and all the sellers from the temple, which in the hand of another would not frighten a child. Whence God says: "If I shall whet my sword as the lightning, and my hand take hold on judgment" (Deut. 32 : 41). Who does not know the power of lightning? It penetrates everything; it destroys everything; so with the sword of God. We have the testimony of those who have seen the torments, and of those who have suffered them. St. Antoninus says that to a certain soul one hour in the pains of purgatory seemed longer than many years, so that he begged to come back to earth to suffer any kind of pain for any number of years. Another, according to St. Boniface, having come back to life, saw the souls in purgatory as in a lake of burning sulphur, some partly immersed, others entirely, until at length they came out purified.

II. They are so confined and bound, as to be unable to help themselves, or free themselves. Nor can they any longer work for themselves, for that night has come to them of which Christ says: "The night cometh when no man can work" (Jno. 9 : 4). Nor can they cry out to us, much less can they go out to seek help. Very rarely has it been permitted one of them to appear to the living to seek aid either for himself or others. Did not the Capharnaites carry the paralytic to Christ, since he was unable to move himself, and let him down through the roof? Cranes in flight are accustomed to sustain their weakened and tired companions until they regain their strength, as natural

historians relate. Storks nourish and carry on their backs their featherless parents, says St. Basil. Tired out and featherless are the souls in purgatory; of their own strength they cannot fly from their chains to heaven; moreover, they are blind, while they do not know how long they will be detained in prison. And will we not render them assistance as brutes render to brutes?

III. Because they are not of a low or servile condition, but all most noble, all holy and innocent, all sons and daughters of God, heirs of the heavenly kingdom, although now in want, misery and chains. Who will not have pity on such? Blessed Peter Damien narrates that when the Marchioness Guilla was traveling through Italy she came to a church, which was commonly called St. Mary the Poor. Being very indignant she remarked: "Far be it from us to call her poor, who elevated above the angels possesses eternal riches in heaven." She made a large bequest to that church, and from thenceforward no one dared call it poor. The purifying souls are children of God, and yet, while they are in purgatory, they are poor, nay, very poor. Whence they are commonly called the poor faithful souls. Who will suffer the children of God to be called poor? who will not be indignant, who will not constantly strive to assist them? Certainly the more virtuous one is, the more worthy is he of benefit; as the richer the soil the more abundant the fruit. But, because all those souls are holy, they are therefore most worthy of aid; who, also, in their time will yield fruit a hundred-fold.

IV. Because, moreover, they are our brothers and sisters. When Mary the sister of Moses was struck with leprosy for murmuring, she was placed outside the camp in a solitary place for seven days, "and the people moved not from the place until Mary was called again" (Num. 12:15). As though they should not cease to pray for her until she should be healed, the woman of their race, the sister of their leader. So our brothers and sisters have been confined in purgatory for crimes committed. What shall we do? shall we ignore them? By no means. Let us stand together and not move a foot until we have used every means for their liberation. Otherwise, the very brute creation will confound us. Lewis, of Granada, writes that a dog in a certain monastery of his order was accustomed to steal food and bring it to his sick comrade lying outside the monastery gate. What more could man do?

A species of fish in the Norwegian ocean on account of their hoodlike appearance are called monks, and if one of their number is captured they create such a tumult around the boat as almost to upset it, and they do not depart until the captive is set free. Shall we not do the same thing for our captive brothers and sisters in purgatory?

Our tumult and noise will be pleasing to God, if by good works we bear violence against heaven. St. Augustine says: "The pig grunts and all the others grunt with him; the ass falls and many rush to raise him. But the poor soul cries out in torments and there is no one to answer. What inhumanity!"

V. Because they are detained there for no crime, but only on account of the guilt of punishment or certain debts for sin contracted and not yet paid. They, therefore, do not suffer as malefactors but as debtors and that for slight offenses. It is not necessary for us to deprive ourselves of all our good works to liberate them; it will be sufficient to offer a part for them. There are three parts in every satisfactory work: merit, satisfaction and obtaining by request. The first remains always with us, the other two we may apply to others, and if we apply them to the poor souls God will reward us a hundred-fold.

But how, you will say, shall we free them from that prison? In four ways: by the Sacrifice of the Mass, by which as a most grateful gift we please God; by prayer and intercession; by almsgiving and by fasting. All these the Sacred Scripture clearly professes to us. Judas Macchabæus ordered sacrifice to be offered for his dead soldiers (2 Mach. 12). St. Augustine says that the poor souls are more benefited by the sacrifice of the Body of Christ, if in the old law they were benefited by the sacrifice of animals. In the Sacrifice of the Mass we send to God the Father his Son as a most acceptable gift, and by this we appease his justice and temper his sternness. Pilate became reconciled to Herod when he sent Christ to him: will not God be pleased if we send him his beloved Son in the Sacrifice of the Mass?

Secondly, prayer. Of this Judas Macchabæus says: "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins."

Thirdly, almsgiving. Tobias said to his son: "Lay out thy bread and thy wine on the burial of a just man" (4:18); that is, give alms to the poor and to the priests. This is a

twofold charity because it nourishes the poor and frees the poor suffering souls.

Fourthly, fasting and other works of mortification. Of this we have an example in David who on account of the death of Saul fasted till evening (2 Kings 1).

For the same reason the men of Jabes Galaad fasted seven days (1 Kings 31 : 13).

Since all these are so, who will be so hard-hearted, so inhuman as not to strive to liberate those poor captives ? Who will not despoil himself of superfluities, go and sell them, and thus buy freedom for those suffering ones ? Do you need all the jewelry you wear, the extravagant clothing you order ? Will not the poor souls in purgatory more securely carry you to heaven than those superfluous things ? Would not your entry into heaven with some poor soul be more pleasing to Christ than if you were arrayed in the most costly raiment and jewels ? Use therefore every means in your power to release the poor souls from their torturing flames and they in turn will bring you to share in their eternal joys.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOW OUR GOODS MUST BE DIVIDED WITH GOD.

I. Thoughts. II. Words. III. Studies and labors. IV. Days. V. Wealth.

"Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).

It is narrated in 3 Kings 3 that two women contended before Solomon about the possession of a child whom each claimed as her own. In order to find the true mother, the king in a most wise judgment ordered the child to be divided into two parts, and one part to be given to each woman. When the true mother heard this she begged the child to be given alive to the other woman; but the other who was not the mother said: "Neither to me nor to thee, but let it be divided." By this it was discovered that the former was the true mother. In like manner God and the world fight for man. God as creator and Lord: the world as a friend, without whom it is difficult to live.

But Christ in to-day's gospel pronounces a wise judgment: namely, that man be divided, and what belongs to God be given to God, and what belongs to the world be given to the world.

I. The thoughts of our heart must be divided, which are commonly made little of, since however they should be highly valued as the offspring of a most noble mother, the intellect, and therefore they are earnestly desired by God, that they may be busy with him and not with vain and secular things. Hence he says to the spouse, that is, to each just soul: "Put

me as a seal upon thy heart" (Cant. 8 : 6), that is, always remember me and think of me as those do who use some sign to help the memory. The wax receives from the seal its form and likeness ; so our heart, when it thinks of God, receives the actual likeness of God. God desires, therefore, as far as possible, that we should always be engaged in the contemplation of the highest good, and moreover that by this very act we may be assimilated. But, on the other hand, the world protests against this ; and as Pharao so burdened the Hebrews with labors that they could not think of God and his sacrifice, so the world strives to draw all our thoughts to itself : many things are necessary to be done, to be disposed of, to be sought for the nourishment of the body, to preserve the family, friendship, etc. What therefore must be done ? Let these thoughts be divided : a part given to God, since all cannot be given ; a part that is necessary given to the world. Let no day pass without often thinking of our highest good and the things pertaining to him : why am I here ? by whom created and for what end ? why have I received an immortal soul ? and how long shall I remain here ? what shall I answer to that Judge ? Likewise daily remember your last end. This is most fitting, because God is the most noble object of our intellect and the most necessary and the scope of all our actions, to whom in all our works we should cry out and moreover have him always before our eyes, because on him we depend each moment of our lives ; because otherwise we show that we do not love God, who never or very rarely remember him ; for the heart of the lover is where he loves, or as the Lord says : "For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (Matt. 6 : 21). Hence Dalila said to Samson : "How dost thou say thou lovest me, when thy mind is not with me ?" (Judg. 16 : 15). Secondly, it is most pleasant, for the memory of God can expel all sadness from the heart, as David found when he said : "I remembered God, and was delighted" (Ps. 76 : 3). It is a certain portion of beatitude to think of God, for beatitude itself consists in the intellectual vision of God. Who will not rejoice if he considers that he has the greatest, most just, richest, mildest God, who cannot be taken away from him by any one, whom he can find at all times and in all places, and before whom he cannot be accused falsely ? Thirdly, because it is most useful. For the soul is not only fed and nourished by such thoughts, but even greater merits are acquired, since

with secular thoughts time for the most part is badly spent. St. Jerome says: "Do you wish to know how the thoughts of men are vain? The father and mother nourish their son and promise themselves happiness with him; they educate him; he becomes a young man; a grand career is open to him; fever attacks him and he is carried off. O, the cares of men! One thought alone brings happiness—to think of God."

II. What are our words which we use among ourselves? Nearly all about food and raiment, about feasts and banquets, about gain and honors, etc.; nothing about God and divine things; nay, more, if one should speak of these at a banquet he would be laughed at and not listened to. But by what right is this? He who gave speech and tongue, is he not also entitled to some part of your speech? Peter says: 'If any speak, *let him speak* as the words of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Therefore by right we divide our speech, and give part to secular affairs and part to God. First, this is most just, because if we bear God in the heart and sincerely love him, we will speak freely about him, we will act and will hear: "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We should give thanks for the daily benefits of God and say with Daniel: "God has remembered me." Secondly, because this is pleasing. For when David was tired from work he was accustomed to sing the psalms. "Thy justifications were the subject of my song, in the place of my pilgrimage" (Ps. 118:54). The same thing the Apostle advises: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephes. 5:19). What traveler is not refreshed when he hears talk about the Holy Land to which he is tending? Who does not freely read about it, speak about it and inquire about it? But we all are tending to that land of celestial happiness. In the time of St. Jerome even the laborers and farmers sang their sacred hymns. The first word that infants learned was Alleluia. Thirdly, it is most fruitful. "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them," says the Lord. This was the case with the disciples who, on their way to Emmaus, were speaking of his passion. On the other hand, without doubt, when the conversation is profane and vile, there the devil is in the midst rejoicing aud urging them on.

III. If we consider our studies, labors and industries,

nearly all these the world wants for itself. Like ants we run on the earth and bend all our energies to seeking food and raiment, honors and wealth, etc. But what does our Lord say to this? "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and the moth consume, and where thieves dig through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19, 20). "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life" (Jno. 6:27). Behold God seeks our industry; the world also seeks it. What must be done? It certainly would be desirable to give all to God, but since that cannot be, let the labor be divided, and a part for nourishing the body be given to the world, and a part for nourishing the soul be given to God. Therefore, let no day pass without some good works. For if the Emperor Titus did not allow a day to pass without doing some good, and if by chance he omitted it, he said: "Friends, I have lost a day;" how much more does it behoove us Christians to do good works? What we do here we store in heaven, and in the proper time shall find it. But if we store little when we could have stored much, shall we not then say: Alas, friends, how many days have I lost! If we could ask of the damned and the souls in purgatory, nearly all would answer: Alas, how many days have I lost! That labor is lost which we spend on the body; only that remains and lays up a treasure in heaven which we spend on the soul. He who has two horses equally divides their food; we have body and soul; let us give to each, therefore, its just measure of food.

Secondly, the incomparable excellence of the heavenly reward demands it. Because "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love him."

Should we not then fight strenuously for such a reward? If we spend all our days, months and years in secular pursuits and derive no spiritual profit, how can we expect an eternal reward? St. Paul says: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3:10).

IV. We must make a division of our days: let the work days be given to the world, and the holidays to God: since he calls these his own. "They have violated my Sabbath" (Ezech. 20). Let us therefore give to God what is God's

and he will give to us what is ours—food and sustenance. As Peter walking on the water did not begin to sink until he had doubted: in like manner we shall not want if we give to God the days that are his. But because we have not confidence in God, then we begin to sink.

V. What about our substance? shall we give nothing to God? Solomon spent more on the temple than on his own house. "Honour the Lord with thy substance" (Prov. 3:9). Although God does not seek our goods, but his honor, let us show that we are his vassals, that we have all things from him, by offering him a small part at least, after the custom of all nations. There was no law in existence when Cain and Abel brought their offerings to God: the former, the fruits of the earth; the latter, the first of his flock: nature alone impelled them to do this. The world on the contrary orders that we should spend all our substance on ourselves, family, friends, animals, etc. How unjust it is to have nothing to give to God and his poor. To whom does God liken such a spendthrift? To that rich man in the gospel who said: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink and make good cheer;" but on the following night he heard the Lord saying to him: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" And immediately the Lord adds: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God" (Luke 12:19–21).

Many indeed are rich towards the world but not towards God. If you have two houses and you wish to spend the winter in one, will you not in summer send supplies there so as not to be in want? But we wish to live in heaven: why therefore do we not send thither a part of our substance; for as the Apostle says: "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings" (2 Cor. 9:6); that is, liberally and profusely.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

WHY PENANCE SHOULD NOT BE PUT OFF FROM DAY TO DAY.

I. Because God is waiting for you to do penance. II. Because there is danger in delay. III. Because from one sin it is easy to fall into others. IV. Because in the meantime much good is lost. V. Because those who always put off scarcely ever will efficaciously. VI. Because the longer penance is put off the more difficult it becomes. VII. Because it is stupid not to wish to eject the enemy immediately.

"Lord, my daughter is just now dead ; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live" (Matt. 9 ; 18).

LET us, with good reason, hear that ruler as though he were a doctor of our law also. For he teaches us two things most necessary and salutary. The first, after sin has been admitted, to seek the remedy immediately and not to put off penance. The second, to hasten to the priest, who through the imposition of hand may absolve us from sin. St. Peter Chrysologus says : "Since this man was a ruler, he knew the law and had read that man was formed by the hand of God : he believed, therefore, that by the same hand, by which his daughter had been created, she could be restored to life." Our only daughter, as was this one of Jairus, is the soul, which, alas, dies when it admits mortal sin. "The soul that sinneth, the same shall die" (Ezech. 18 : 20). There is a remedy, however, for this death, if you go to the confessor and ask him through the imposition of hand to recall your soul back to life. But see that with the ruler you hasten while the soul is yet warm ; see that you do not put off from day to day, for you have only one soul. St. Chrysostom says : "God gave us all things double : two eyes,

two ears, two hands, two feet. If one of these be wounded, we have the other to console us. He gave us but one soul. If we lose this, how shall we live ? Let us provide then for this, preferring nothing to its salvation. There are many reasons which urge us not to put off the salvation of the soul.

I. Because God is waiting for us to do penance, who can at any moment more easily cast us into hell than if we allow a glass to fall and to be broken into fragments. Surely if we were called by our superior to patch a friendship which we violated, who would dare to trifle with him, to delay ? But for this end God calls us, and do we dare to bear enmity towards him for a moment ? When Antiochus Epiphanes laid siege to Alexandria, which was under the protectorate of the Romans, Popilius Lænas, a Roman Senator, was sent to him who ordered him to raise the siege, if not, he would be considered an enemy of the Romans. He answered that he would more maturely consider the matter and then give his answer. At this the Senator made a line around Antioch and said : "Is there a doubt that you are an enemy of the Romans ? you shall not pass this line until you define your position." "I will obey," said Antiochus, and he raised the siege. How much more truly can this be said to the sinner : Do you dare to put off your return to the friendship of God ? You shall not pass a day, the circle of the sun, until you define your position. Otherwise how will you not stimulate the anger of God more and more towards you who so long put him off waiting. Remember that vine from which the Lord expected grapes "and it brought forth wild grapes" (Isa. 5 : 4), and therefore he ordered it to be destroyed. Remember the unfruitful fig-tree which for three years was expected to bear fruit and at length was ordered to be cut down. No wonder ; this negligence redounds to the greatest injury to God : as though we had a stupid or wooden God.

II. Because there is danger in delay ; for perhaps life will not be prolonged for you as long until you repent ; and if that be conceded you, perhaps the grace of repentance will not be given you. Hasten therefore to penance as to the healing pool when the water is moved, lest perchance another go down before you, for he who went down first to the pool was healed (Jno. 5). Whence Ecclesiasticus says: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day. For his wrath shall come on a sudden ;

and in the time of vengeance he will destroy thee" (5 : 8, 9). Perhaps there is no doubt but that the water is oftener moved, that is, the grace of vocation is offered you : but it is uncertain whether you pay heed to that movement and vocation. "Cling to penance as a drowning man clings to a plank," says St. Ambrose. Penance is the second plank after the wreck. But perhaps you will object that in Scripture life and salvation are promised to those hoping in God. But do you not notice that those promises are made not to sinners but to the just only? "The eyes of the Lord are upon the just and his ears unto their prayers" (Ps. 33 : 16). "Say to the just man that it is well" (Isa. 3 : 10). He speaks of sinners otherwise. "Cut it down therefore ; why doth it take up the ground?" (Luke 13 : 7). Do not flatter yourself about the mercy of God ; for in him there is justice also, and that the most severe : since he did not spare the sinning Angels, but on account of one sin he hurled them into hell. He is the same now who from the highest throne of glory beholds those in the intolerable flames of hell wailing and lamenting, nor will their cries move him to mercy throughout all eternity. Therefore do not flatter yourself too much.

III. Because from one sin, unless you soon repent, you will be precipitated into others : one begets many, as was the case with Cain, who from envy fell into hatred, then into murder, from this into lying, then into rebellion against God and finally into despair. From adultery David fell into murder. Who does not know that a single rope is easily broken, but if many are twisted together how difficult? By adding sins to sins, you are making a stronger rope. "Woe to you that draw iniquity with cords of vanity" (Isa. 5 : 18). As moneys received from a usurer, unless soon returned, always increase the debt : so sins which are not soon wiped out increase. The devil, the usurer, demands sins as usury for sins : when you pay him you lay up wrath for yourself against the day of wrath.

IV. Because in the meantime you lose very many goods which you could have gained if you were in the state of grace. For as long as you are in the state of sin, your wife, your soul brings forth dead offspring to you, works namely wanting in merit, nothing profitable for heaven, and when others are taking heaven by force, you are absent asleep.

V. Because those who put off from day to day almost never efficaciously will : and he who does not begin with the pres-

ent occasion offered, scarcely will begin afterwards. They put off from feast to feast, from year to year, no time pleases them. As lazy girls bind the flax on the distaff but do not apply the hand with the spindle nor do they begin to make thread: so many carry the flax on the distaff because they propose to amend; in the meantime they never seize the spindle. On the other hand the wise woman "hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle" (Prov. 31: 13, 19). Alcuin says: "Perhaps you say, to-morrow you will be converted. O crow voice, the crow did not return to the Ark, the dove returned." It seems that the crow returned to the top of the Ark and perched there, from what is said in the Chaldean text: "He went out and returned," but he did not return into the Ark and to Noe. By the same reason some propose to return to God through penance, nor are they far from it: they come into the church but they cannot enter the Confessional.

VI. Because the longer conversion is put off, the more difficult it becomes, as can be gathered from to-day's Gospel. The girl did nothing towards her resuscitation; the woman with the flow of blood should do many things, rush through the crowd, follow Christ and touch his garment. Again, this girl recently dead is soon raised by the Lord and is said to be only sleeping, but Lazarus four days dead was aroused by a strong voice, because he was a type of the inveterate sinner. Whence Jairus said: "Place your hand on her and she lives," as though the raising would be certain and easy; Martha, on the other hand, as though diffident of the raising of Lazarus, said to the Lord ordering the sepulcher to be opened: "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he is now of four days." Four days, I say, on account of four causes from which this difficulty arises.

First, from the watchfulness of the devil, who holds his slaves captive, and the more strongly the longer they are bound to him. The disciples of Christ could not expel the demon that possessed the man from his youth (Mark 9). As the fly falling into the spider's web, unless he soon extricates himself, is so wrapped by the spider that he cannot escape; so the sinner, unless he soon extricates himself from the net of the demon, becomes more and more entangled.

Secondly, from the crowd of thoughts impeding conversion, such as the loss of goods, honors, friends, and other com-

modities, the remembrance of past pleasures, etc. By which iron chain St. Augustine confessed himself to have been bound. These impediments always increase as an overflowing stream, which if you were scarcely able to cross in the morning, much less will you be able in the evening, while in the meantime you hope for it to diminish. Many, for instance, so rarely hear sermons, that at length they are ashamed to hear them, nor do they abandon other vices which for a long time they have contracted lest their neighbors will wonder at them if they follow the narrow path and repent.

Thirdly, from personal weakness and feebleness of strength ; for the intellect is obscured by sin, the judgment is dulled, the will depraved, rebellion of the sensitive appetites increases, so that the sickness becomes daily. As in a clock, if one wheel stops they all stop : so, if the powers of the mind become feeble and depraved, the whole man becomes weak. Samson with his hair cut could no longer break the rope, which he so easily did before. But to break the chain of sin is a difficult thing : the love of God above all things is required, serious grief for offenses against God, a firm purpose of amendment ; all these are not so easily acquired.

Fourthly, from a contracted habit which is as another nature. Hence in Jeremias 13 : 23, we read : "If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots ; you, also, may do well when you have learned evil." When Diogenes was arguing with a certain wicked man he was asked what he should do. "I wash the Ethiopian," said Diogenes, "to make him white," signifying that his labor with the wicked man was in vain. The more strokes a nail receives the more firmly is it fixed : so the more frequently crimes are committed the more strongly are they impressed on the mind and it becomes more difficult to remove them. It is believed that, when Sisara felt himself affixed to the earth, he moved his hand to the nail and tried to extract it (Judg. 4). In vain did he strive, for by many strokes it was firmly fixed in the floor. So when the sinner shall feel the blows of deathly sickness, he tries to extract the nail of bad habit, but how difficult it is. What shall be the end of such a life ? Shall it not be bad ? Search all the Scriptures, and you will find nothing more frequently than what man sowed, that also did he reap, as he was in life, so was he in death. "For every tree is known by its fruit. For men do not gather figs from

thorns : nor from a bramble bush do they gather the grape" (Luke 6 : 44). "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths to hell" (Prov. 2 : 18). He, therefore, whose life, whose thoughts, words and works, always incline to hell, whither at length shall he go unless to hell ? He who walks here in interior darkness, whither shall he go unless into exterior darkness ?

VII. Because it is stupid, when you can, not to wish to eject the enemy immediately ; this Pharao did when asked by Moses when he wished to be relieved of the plague of frogs —*to-morrow* he answered. The frogs of your sins are always with you tormenting you, and yet you do not wish to be relieved from them to-day, but to-morrow. It is stupid to choose the uncertain and let go the certain. To-day is certain for you, to-morrow uncertain.

"Let go the uncertain and hold the certain," says St. Augustine.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

SIX PLACES OF REFUGE FROM THE WRATH TO COME.

I. The Faith of the Catholic Church, and obedience to her teachings. II. The tribunal of penance. III. Works of mercy. IV. Earnest and constant prayer. V. An ever present fear of and meditation on the judgment. VI. Entrance into the religious state, or other like state of security.

"Then they that are in Judea, let them flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24 : 16).

GREAT indeed was the favor which God showed to the family of the just Lot, when he sent his two angels to warn it and to rescue it from the fiery destruction that was to come upon Sodom : but greater far the favor that he showed us when he sent his only Son, Christ, the Angel of Great Counsel, to forewarn us of the coming and final destruction of the world, and the day of Judgment. This does Christ in to-day's Gospel. Angels warned Lot to flee from the burning of his home : but Christ, the master of Angels, warns us to flee from the destruction of the world, and the anger of a wrathful God.

The Angels commanded that no one look behind him in the flight : Christ, that he who is in the fields, return not to take his coat, and that he who is on the housetop, descend not first into his house. The Angels said : "Save thyself in the mountain" : Christ, "Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains." What are these mountains, to which we should betake ourselves if we would hide from the wrath to come ?

In the old law, God ordered that there be set aside six cities, within which he who had unwillingly taken blood might seek refuge, and thus escape the death penalty at the

hands of the relatives of him whom he had killed: and the six were so set aside after the coming of the children of Israel into the promised land.

Thus also do we find set aside for us just so many places of refuge wherein we may lie hidden from the wrath of that pursuing God, whose only Son we have too often, and even wilfully, killed.

I. The faith of the Catholic Church and obedience to her teachings in the first of these God-given places of safety. St. Ambrose and St. Basil commenting on the words of the Psalmist: "the rocks are a refuge for the conies," tell us that the sea-cony, foreseeing the tempest, cleaves with all its strength to the nearest rock, that it may not be washed up to its death on the dry sands of the shore. Thus also must we cling steadfastly to the rock upon which is built the Catholic Church, if we would weather the tempests that rage about us. As no one outside the ark escaped the flood and its attendant destruction; so also will no one, refusing God's imitation, be saved outside the Catholic Church. Whence says the Lord, "He that does not believe, is already judged" (Jno. 4:18).

Since, however, faith alone cannot save, and since there are, even within the Church, good and bad, sheep and goats, just as in the ark there were animals both clean and unclean; so it must be distinctly borne in mind that he, who would stand with confidence at the judgment, must also obey the ordinances of the Church and of her Prelates, and must prove himself a sheep of the fold of Christ. Thus, on that last day, will Christ call the elect standing on his right hand, sheep; and the wicked on his left, goats; because the former like the gentle sheep have hearkened to him and have followed his shepherd voice whithersoever it directed, as he himself has said, "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me;" but the latter—the wicked—like unto goats, have ever turned aside to the hillsides and would not be kept in the beaten path. Reason itself manifests that, if the Church and her Prelates point out the way, they alone will be unseverable for us on that awful day; and that we, the unresisting sheep, who have followed the guidance of the Church, obeyed her precepts, and hearkened ever to the voice of her Prelates and Shepherds, will revel in the rich, nourishing pastures of the word of God and of the Sacraments, and will be held wholly unaccountable when the Judge comes to his judgment.

Therefore, "in obedience," says St. Jerome, "not only is the mind relieved from giving an accounting of those committed to it, but even from an accounting of itself. O, height of liberty, wherein man can scarcely sin!"

If the blind man be led among the growing crops and trample them down, will not he who led him thither be accounted the wrongdoer? So much the more the shepherd that has led his sheep astray. Plutarch tells us that a little fish called "the leader" is given to each of the great monsters of the deep to direct its course, lest perchance it run upon the shallows or enter into narrows whence there might be no exit. Absolute is the dependence of the monster upon its little guide; for when the little one stops, the big one also rests, and when the little one goes forward, the big one must perforce follow; and many indeed have perished and have been thrown upon the land because they essayed to move without their leader. God has given to Christians an example, in this big fish, of the proper obedience to his Church and her prelates. "Whatsoever the religion and wisdom of the layman," says Basil, "never let him cease to be a sheep," since he ought to follow the leading of the Church and his spiritual director, and thus avoid the shallows and the rocks of the divine judgment.

II. The tribunal of Penance. St. John the Baptist, beholding those who had come to him out of Jerusalem, to confess their sins, wondered who had shown them this saving refuge: "Ye brood of vipers, who hath showed you the way to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of penance" (Matt. 3:7, 8).

St. Gregory, commenting on these words, says that the anger to come is the final, avenging castigation which the sinner cannot then escape who does not now betake himself to tears of penance. "Let penance run apace," says Peter Crysologus, "lest the condemnation outstrip it; and lest we be judged, let us be the judges." Thus did the Ninivites, hastening to do penance, forestall the Judge and avert his decree of divine wrath. Compare the tribunal of penance with the tribunal of the Judge to come, and note the gentleness of the one and the unbearable rigor of the other. Here, the penitent examines his own conscience; there, with accusing angels and saints standing round about, will it be examined by a relentless Judge; here, grief and contrition will avail; there, but gnawing despair will be left; here, a

light penance ; there, the pain of an eternal hell ; here, forgiveness ; there, damnation.

Who would not most willingly undergo this light judgment, that he might thus escape that other, fraught with such terrible rigor ? Do we not drink bitter draughts, undergo painful privations, and even suffer the life's blood to be drained from us, that we may avoid a temporary illness ? Then, why will we not drink deeply of the bitterness of penance, that we may avoid a death, terrible and eternal ? Therefore judge thyself by daily examinations, and then in frequent confessions "strive to empty the fetid sink of vices" (St. Augustine).

III. Works of mercy : for to such is promised great security in the day of Judgment : "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5 : 7) ; and again, "Alms shall be a great confidence before the most high God, to all them that give it" (Tobi. 4 : 12). "Alms," says St. Chrysostom, "stands at the tribunal of Christ, not alone as an advocate, but as one persuading the Judge to accept the advocate in the place of the criminal." With what lightness of heart would not he, who is about to contend for the doctor's degree, approach the examination, had he one to instruct him and solve beforehand the very questions that would surely be asked ! This does alms : for as we know that God's examination will be especially concerning works of mercy, it provides us beforehand with the answers to his questions. "What shall I do ? For my master takes away from me my stewardship," thought the faithless steward, when he knew that he must give an accounting. And was it not alms-giving, even out of the goods of his master, that suggested itself to his mind as his only refuge ? And the master praised him, because he had done well.

If then, because of age or infirmity, you cannot dig, that is to say, chastise the body by fastings and other voluntary afflictions : or again, if you are unable to assist at prayer, because of the exaction of your business, public and private, then hasten, as did the wise steward, to make unto thyself friends of the children of Mammon.

The scarlet rope hanging from the window of Raab was a guarantee of safety and mercy to all that household, because by that same rope had mercy been done, when by it the explorers were lowered from the city's walls. It was to Raab a shield surpassing embattled walls. He, therefore, who does

mercy will by the same token be secure at the Judgment; for he has but to say, will you not, O God, have pity on him who was ever mindful of yours?

IV. Earnest and constant prayer. This was assuredly the meaning of Christ when, having foretold the Judgment, he added: "Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). Note here that it is only earnest and continual prayer that will save us from the anger to come. Therefore they do little or nothing, who pray but rarely. Our Lord also teaches the same in that parable of the king who, wishing to join battle with an enemy more powerful than he, first sits down and considers whether with his ten thousand soldiers he should go out to meet him who is coming with twenty thousand, and, if he foresees that his forces are unequal to the task, sends to his enemy while yet a long way off and asks those things that tend towards peace. Thus would our Lord admonish us to go out and meet afar off the Eternal King, who is even now on his way with an army of untold Angels and Saints. Since then we can never cope with his strength and power, for as Job says, we cannot oppose even one to his thousands, let us now, whilst he is at a great distance, that is to say, at the present moment, send forward an embassy of fervent prayer, and make our peace with him. If we do not anticipate him before he is obliged to come with his army, then will his anger be more bitter, from the fact that we have contemned the wealth of his goodness, patience, and long suffering, and have but laid up to ourselves treasures of a God's wrath. Is it not so with the kings of the earth? Does not the anger of a king grow apace with the perseverance of the rebels, and their refusal to sue for pardon, or to humble themselves before him, until finally the day comes when he takes up arms to crush the rebellion and will absolutely ignore any plea for mercy? Therefore, lest at some time we offend an irate God, let us hasten to appease him. So admonishes St. Augustine: "A pacified God is our only refuge from an angry God," alluding most likely to the woman, who, having asked the aid of Cæsar, who would not in his anger hear her, cried out that she would appeal to Cæsar. "To what Cæsar will you appeal?" said he: to whom the woman replied: "From Cæsar angered, to Cæsar pacified." With like effect did a woman appeal from Phillip

sleeping to Phillip awake. Christ now watches and waits for us : let us then appeal to him watching and waiting ; for he, also, will be at some time asleep, and perhaps will not be awakened in time.

V. Constant fear and thought of judgment : for it is written : " With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the last" (Eccl. 1 : 13). Whoever fears that day will so direct his actions that he offend not God, nor fall upon his anger. The steersman who would keep his ship from the rocks stands guiding it from the stern and not from the prow ; and thus the soul, the pilot of our life, will direct all things successfully if it keeps the eye steadfastly upon the last judgment. Holy Job testifies to the same : " What shall I do, when God shall rise to judge ? and when he shall examine, what shall I answer him" (Job 31 : 14) ; and he himself answers : " I feared all my works, knowing that thou didst not spare the offender" (Job 9 : 28). St. Jerome also : " Whether I eat, or drink, or whatever else I do, those words are always sounding in my ears : Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment, and my soul and body tremble with a great fear at the very thought." And still further on he adds : " Nor have I ever had a joy that could banish from my mind the bitterness of the judgment to come." So also the Abbot Amon : " Put yourself in the place of one confined in prison : does he not continually ask : Where is the judge, and when will he come ? and in his fearful expectation, does he not bewail the punishment that is to fall upon him with the coming of the judge ? " So also do you say to your soul : Woe is me, if I forget that fearful tribunal, and the account that I must give ! Did I but continually meditate thereon, I would be saved !

VI. Finally, there is a mountain wholly secure, which I shall point out, although it may not be altogether attractive to you. Renounce the world, and seek safety from its storms and tempests in a life of perfection wholly given to the direct service of God. The old fable about the swallows is to the point. When first man began to sow flax, the swallow advised his fellow birds to prevent the sowing of the seed, for that would lay danger to their whole race. But they laughed at the would-be prophet. Again, when the flax peeped forth from the ground and began to take on a young strength, did he beg them to pluck it up by the roots : and still did they laugh him to scorn. In the fulness of the season, again did

he exhort them to lay waste the ripened crops ; and when they would not even yet hearken to him, he left the assembly of birds and made to himself a compact with man, living thereafter with him, and coaxing him to kindness with cheerful twitterings at his very door-posts. Truly a wonderful lesson to the other birds, since from flax are made nets and snares for their destruction ! Wouldst know what the fable means ? Then listen. God sows his flax when he writes down against us the sentence of condemnation according to our merits ; and his flax is ripened when the judgment is at hand. Let us pluck up the seeds by serious and constant repentance and change of life ; even though the world stand and laugh at us, and perhaps impede our every effort. And if you would be assuredly safer, flee from the dangers of the world, and enter into a state of perfection, where there will be only God and his divine service. Notwithstanding the explicit command of the angel that they flee to the mountain, did not Lot's wife, fearful of the fatigue, wish to stop in the little town of Segor that lay at the foot of the hills ? And even so do I expect you to murmur. Difficult indeed is the ascent of the mountain of religion, and it is a hard road to the many : therefore would they stay in Segor, that is, in a state not wholly removed from the world and its allurements. Note the extreme solicitude with which the merchant chooses his road that he may bring his goods safely home. Does not he who would cross a broad and precipitate river with his goods upon his shoulders, trusting solely to his ability as a swimmer, run the imminent danger of losing both life and goods ? He who commits himself and his goods to a skiff is more prudent, although he still invites destruction from the rocks and the whirlpools : and even if he load his goods upon a merchant vessel, he has yet the great tempests and storms with which to contend. He only is perfectly secure who seeks the bridge, even be it out of his way, and hard of access. The world is this vast and swift ruin in which they are completely engulfed who are wholly given over to its worries and cares. Others there are who use the world as if they did not use it ; not altogether carried along by it, but kept therein by family ties ; and these are somewhat more secure. But he who passes over the world upon the bridge of religion, is wholly without fear ; since the protecting sides of the bridge shut out even the sight of the madly rushing waters below. Let each one then measure

his own strength, and presume not too far. If he be unwilling to seek the bridge, let him at least embark in a merchant vessel ; and if this be too great an undertaking, then let him by all means take a skiff ; but under no circumstances should he, solely relying upon his own natural strength, commit himself and his weight of cares and business to the swiftly running current of the world.

Whilst the elect are fleeing to the mountain, what are the rejected doing ? Just what the inhabitants of Sodom long ago did under like circumstances : " Likewise as it came to pass in the days of Lot : They did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted and built. And in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed " (Luke 17 : 28–30). And woe and alas ! how many there are to-day like unto them !

The day will come when, all too late and in vain, they will call upon these mountains : " Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb " (Apoc. 6 : 16). Let them make use of the advice here given, and flee now to those mountains, that they may lie secure on the great day that is to come.

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